

The Pacific

# SPECTATOR

## THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE MASSES

*Eric Hoffer*

## INDIA'S ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

*Palayam Balasundaram*

*Also*

MAX SAVELLE, THOMAS MOLNAR

TILLIE OLSEN, MAX COSMAN

WINTER 1956

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# THE PACIFIC SPECTATOR

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**D**R. Palayam M. Balasundaram points out in this issue how in former years the people of India looked to the United States for moral support in the cause of their freedom. The fact is that until shortly after World War II large numbers of Asian people admired the United States as a former British colony whose sympathy could be counted on in their various struggles for independence. How is it, then, that after little more than a decade many people of the East have come to view the United States as opposed to all political and economic change in Asia, however legitimate, and have seemed to look toward China and the USSR for inspiration?

The reasons are numerous and complex, but in recent weeks we have seen an embarrassingly clear example of how American insensitiveness to fundamental Asian impulses can damage almost overnight the disposition of Asian peoples toward us. This happened while Nikolai A. Bulganin and Nikita S. Khrushchev were visiting India and Burma.

During the first week of their Indian tour the Soviet leaders, misjudging the Indian temper, launched attacks on the United States and other countries with which India has no basic quarrel. The reaction among thoughtful Indians was immediate and generally unfavorable. Many felt genuinely annoyed at this Russian use of an Indian platform for attacks against the West.

At that moment a measured response or even a dignified silence on the part of the United States might well have been received in India and throughout much of Asia with good-natured relief. As it was, the Russians, apparently sensing objections to their misuse of Indian hospitality, shifted attention to the support of Indian claims over Portuguese Goa, a microscopic vestige of Western imperialism on India's west coast and an intense emotional issue to many Indians.

At this juncture the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles,

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same subject, was published in the January 1955 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

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(Continued on page 87)

# THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE MASSES

*by Eric Hoffer*

THE intellectual as a champion of the masses is a fairly recent phenomenon. Education does not naturally waken in us a concern for the lot of the uneducated. The distinction conferred by education is more easily maintained by a sharp separation from those below than by a continued excellence of achievement. When Gandhi was asked by an American clergyman what it was that worried him most, he replied: "The hardness of heart of the educated."

In almost every civilization we know of, the intellectuals have been either allied with those in power or members of a governing elite, and consequently indifferent to the fate of the masses. In ancient Egypt and Imperial China the literati were magistrates, overseers, stewards, tax-gatherers, scribes, secretaries, and officials of every kind. They were in command, and did not lift a finger to lighten the burden of the lower orders. In India the intellectuals were members of the uppermost caste of the Brahmins. Gautama, who preached the love of service for others and the mixing of castes, was by birth not an intellectual but a warrior; and the attempt to translate Buddha's teaching into reality was made by another warrior—Emperor Asoka. The Brahmin intellectuals, far from rallying to the cause, led the opposition to Buddhism, and finally drove it out of India. In classical Greece the intellectuals were at the top of the social ladder: philosophers and poets were also legislators, generals, and statesmen. This intellectual elite had an ingrained contempt for the common people who did the world's work, regarding them as no better than slaves and unfit for citizenship. In the Roman Empire, the intellectuals, whether Greek or Roman, made common cause with the powers that be, and kept their dis-



tance from the masses. In medieval Europe, too, the intellectual was a member of a privileged order—the Church—and did not manifest undue solicitude for the underprivileged.

In only one society prior to the emergence of the modern Occident do we find a group of men of words raising their voices in defense of the weak and oppressed. For many centuries the small nation of the ancient Hebrews on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean did not differ markedly in its institutions and spiritual life from its neighbors. But in the eighth century B.C., owing to an obscure combination of circumstances, it began to develop a most strange deviation. Side by side with the traditional men of words—priests, counselors, soothsayers, scribes—there emerged a series of extraordinary men who pitted themselves against the ruling elite and the prevailing social order. These men, the prophets, were in many ways the prototype of the modern militant intellectual. Renan speaks of them as “open-air journalists” who recited their articles in the street, in the market-place, and at the city gate. “The first article of irreconcilable journalism was written by Amos about 800 B.C.” Many of the characteristic attitudes of the modern intellectual—his tendency to see any group he identifies himself with as a chosen people, and any truth he embraces as the one and only truth; the envisioning of a millennial society on earth—are clearly discerned in the prophets. The ideals, also, and the holy causes that intellectuals are preaching and propagating today, were fully formulated during the three centuries in which the prophets were active.

We know too little about these remote centuries to explain the rise of the prophets, certainly too little to draw a clear parallel with the rise of the militant intellectual in the modern Occident. One cannot help wondering, however, whether a diffusion of literacy in the ninth century B.C., during the reigns of David and Solomon, was not one of the factors. It was at about that time that the Phoenician traders perfected the simple alphabet from the complex and cumbersome picture writing of the Egyptians. And considering the intimate relations which prevailed then between the Phoenicians and the Hebrews (particularly in the days of

Solomon), it would not be unreasonable to assume that the latter were quick to adopt the new easy writing.

The resulting increase in literacy, if our assumptions are correct, was fraught with consequences for Hebrew society. In Phoenicia the new alphabet was primarily an instrument of commerce, and the sudden increase in the number of literate persons presented no problem, for they were readily absorbed in the far-flung trade organizations. But in the chiefly agricultural Hebrew society the new men of words found themselves suspended between the privileged clique, whose monopoly on reading and writing they had broken, and the illiterate masses, to which they were allied by birth. Since they had neither position nor adequate employment, it was natural that they should align themselves against established privilege, and become self-appointed spokesmen of their inarticulate brethren. Such at least might have been the circumstances at the rise of the earliest prophets—of Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, and his disciples. They set the pattern; and the road trodden by them was later followed by men of all walks of life, even by Isaiah the aristocrat.

The rise of the militant intellectual in the Occident was brought about not by a simplification of the art of writing but by the introduction of paper and printing. Undoubtedly, the Church's monopoly of education was considerably weakened by the dissensions and disorders of the Papacy in the late Middle Ages—and by the Black Death, which killed off almost half of the clergy—but it was the introduction of paper and printing that finished the job. The new men of words, like those of the eighth century B.C., were on the whole unattached—allied with neither Church nor government. They had no clear status, no self-evident role of social usefulness. In the social orders evolved by the modern Occident, power and influence were, and still are, in the hands of men of action: princes, landowners, soldiers, bankers, businessmen, and industrialists. The intellectual is treated as a poor relation and must be satisfied with crumbs. Even when he is recognized and rewarded, he does not feel himself part of the elite. He finds himself almost superfluous in a civilization which is largely his handiwork. Small



wonder that he tends to resent those in power as intruders and usurpers.

Thus the antagonism between men of words and men of action which first emerged as a historical motif among the Hebrews in the eighth century B.C., and made of them a peculiar people, reappeared in the sixteenth century in the life of the modern Occident, and set it apart from all other civilizations. The unattached intellectual's unceasing search for a recognized status and a useful role has brought him to the forefront of every movement of change since the Reformation, not only in the West but wherever Western influence has penetrated. He has consistently sought a link with the underprivileged, be they bourgeois, peasants, proletarians, persecuted minorities, or the natives of colonial countries. So far, his most potent alliance has been with the masses.

There is no doubt that this formidable alliance has been the chief factor in bringing about the unprecedented advancement of the masses in modern times. Yet, despite its achievements, it is not based on a real affinity.

The intellectual goes to the masses in search of weightiness and a role of leadership. Unlike the man of action, the man of words needs the sanction of ideals and the incantation of words in order to act forcefully. He wants to lead, command, and conquer, but he must feel that in satisfying these hungers he does not cater to a petty self. He needs justification, and he seeks it in the realization of a grandiose design, and in the solemn ritual of making the word become flesh. Thus he does battle for the down-trodden and disinherited, and for liberty, equality, justice, and truth, though, as Thoreau pointed out, the grievance which animates him is not mainly "his sympathy with his fellows in distress, but, though he be the holiest son of God, is his private ail." Once his "private ail" is righted, the intellectual's ardor for the underprivileged cools considerably. His cast of mind is essentially aristocratic. Like Heraclitus he is convinced that "ten thousand (of the masses) do not turn the scale against a single man of worth" and that "the many are mean; only the few are noble." He sees

himself as a leader and master.\* Not only does he doubt that the masses could do anything worth while on their own, but he would resent it if they made the attempt. The masses must obey. They need the shaping force of discipline in both war and peace. It is indeed doubtful that the typical intellectual would feel wholly at home in a society where the masses get their share of the fleshpots. Not only would there be little chance for leadership where people are almost without a grievance, but we might suspect that the cockiness and the airs of a prosperous populace would offend his aristocratic sensibilities.

There is considerable evidence that when the militant intellectual succeeds in establishing a social order in which his craving for a superior status and social usefulness is fully satisfied, his view of the masses darkens, and from being their champion he becomes their detractor. The struggle initiated by the prophets in the eighth century B.C. ended, some three hundred years later, in the complete victory of the men of words. After the return from the Babylonian captivity the scribes and the scholars were supreme, and the Hebrew nation became "a people of the book." Once dominant, these scribes, like the Pharisees who succeeded them, flaunted their loathing of the masses. They made the word for common folk, *am-ha-aretz*, a term of derision and scorn—even the gentle Hillel taught that "no *am-ha-aretz* can be pious." Yet these scribes had an unassailable hold on the masses they despised. The noble Carpenter from Galilee could make no headway when He challenged the pretensions of the solemn scholars, hair-splitting lawyers, and arrogant pedants, and raised His voice in defense of the poor and meek. He was ostracized and anathematized, and His teachings found a following chiefly among non-Jews. Yet the teachings of Jesus fared no better than the teachings of the prophets when they came wholly into the keeping of dominant intellectuals. They were made into a vehicle for the maintenance and aggrandizement of a vast hierarchy of priests, while the poor in spirit, instead of

\* In 1935 a group of students at Rangoon University banded themselves together into a revolutionary group and immediately added the prefix *Thakin* (master) to their names.



inheriting the earth, were left to sink into serfdom and superstitious darkness.

In the sixteenth century, we see the same pattern again. When Luther first defied the Pope and his councils he spoke feelingly of "the poor, simple common folk." Later, when allied with the German princelings, he lashed out against the rebellious masses with unmatched ferocity: "Let there be no half-measures! Cut their throats! Transfix them! Leave no stone unturned! To kill a rebel is to destroy a mad dog." He assured his aristocratic patrons that "a prince can enter heaven by the shedding of blood more certainly than others by means of prayer."

It is the twentieth century, however, which has given us the most striking example of the discrepancy between the attitude of the intellectual while the struggle is on, and his role once the battle is won. Marxism started out as a movement for the salvation of both the masses and the intellectuals from the servitude and degradation of a capitalist social order. *The Communist Manifesto* condemned the bourgeoisie not only for pauperizing, dehumanizing, and enslaving the toiling masses, but also for robbing the intellectual of his elevated status. "The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe." Though the movement was initiated by intellectuals and powered by their talents and hungers, it yet held up the proletariat as the chosen people—the only carrier of the revolutionary idea, and the chief beneficiary of the revolution to come. The intellectuals, particularly those who had "raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole," were to act as guides—as a composite Moses—during the long wanderings in the desert. Like Moses, the intellectuals would have no more to do once the promised land was in sight. "The role of the intelligentsia," said Lenin, "is to make special leaders from among the intelligentsia unnecessary."

The Marxist movement has made giant strides during the past forty years. It has created powerful political parties in most countries, and it is in possession of absolute power in the vast stretch of land between the Elbe and the China Sea. In Russia, China,

and adjacent smaller countries the revolution envisaged by Marxism has been consummated. What, then, is the condition of the masses and the intellectuals in these countries?

In no other social order, past or present, has the intellectual so completely come into his own as in the communist regimes. Never before has his superior status been so self-evident, and his social usefulness so unquestioned. The bureaucracy, which manages and controls every field of activity, is staffed by writers, poets, artists, scientists, professors, journalists, and others engaged in intellectual pursuits, all of whom are readily accorded the high social status of the superior civil servant. They are the aristocrats, the rich, the prominent, the admired, the indispensable, the pampered and petted. It is the wildest dream of the man of words come true.

And what of the masses in this intellectual's paradise? They have found in the intellectual the most formidable taskmaster in history. No other regime has treated the masses so callously as raw material, to be experimented on and manipulated at will; and never before have so many lives been wasted so recklessly in war and in peace. On top of all this, the communist intelligentsia have been using force in a wholly novel manner. The traditional master uses force to exact obedience and lets it go at that. Not so the man of words. Because of his professed faith in the power of words and the irresistibility of the truths which supposedly shape his course, he cannot be satisfied with mere obedience. He tries to obtain by force a response that is usually obtained by the most perfect persuasion, and he uses Terror as a fearful instrument to extract faith and fervor from crushed souls.

To sum up, the intellectual's concern for the masses is as a rule a symptom of his uncertain status and his lack of an unequivocal sense of social usefulness. It is the activities of the chronically thwarted intellectual which make it possible for the masses to assert themselves and get their share of the good things of life. When the intellectual comes into his own, he becomes a pillar of stability and finds all kinds of lofty reasons for siding with the strong against the weak.



It is, then, in the interest of the masses that the struggle between the intellectual and the prevailing dispensation should remain undecided. But can we justify a continuing state of affairs in which the most gifted part of the population is ever denied its heart's desire, while the unenterprising masses go on from strength to strength?

Actually, antagonism between the intellectual and the powers that be does more than merely advance the masses: it keeps the social order from stagnating. The causes of creative vigor and of stagnation are many and complex, but it seems clear that the relations between the educated class and the ruling class must be taken seriously into account. It is impossible, for instance, to understand why societies in the Orient are stagnant without recognizing that in these societies the educated are not only few, but almost always part of the government. The first step in the awakening of a stagnant society is the estrangement of the educated minority from the prevailing dispensation, which is usually effected by the penetration of some foreign influence. This change in the relations between the educated and the ruling group has been a factor in almost every renaissance, including that of Europe from the stagnation of the Middle Ages. And it seems to be the continued antagonism between the unattached intellectual and a governing class made up largely of sheer men of action that, more than anything else, has given the modern Occident its peculiar disquiet, drive, and creative vigor.

The strange thing is that where the intellectuals are in power they do not usually create a milieu conducive to genuine creativeness. The reason for this is to be found in the role of the noncreative pseudo-intellectual in such a system. The genuinely creative person lacks as a rule the temperament requisite for the seizure, the exercise, and, above all, the retention of power. Hence, when the intellectuals come into their own, it is usually the pseudo-intellectual who rules the roost, and he is likely to imprint his mediocrity and meagerness on every phase of cultural activity. Moreover, his creative impotence often brews in him a murderous hatred of intellectual brilliance; he may even be tempted, as Stalin was, to enforce a crude leveling of all intellectual activity.

The pseudo-intellectual exerts his pernicious influence not only as a leader but also as a follower. The lesser pseudo-intellectuals feel happiest in a society where intellectual distinction and the rewards that go with it are attained not by a creative effort, but by the more or less mechanical mastery of a body of learning. They are most satisfied with an arrangement where assiduous application enables a student to pass difficult examinations which automatically confer on him a distinguished degree and entitle him to a status of unquestioned superiority. Such was the state of affairs in which thrived the Egyptian literati, the Chinese mandarins, the Rabbis and their disciples, and the priests of the Middle Ages. Such, too, is the pattern now taking shape in the communist regimes. It creates a milieu which saps intellectual confidence and independence, and engenders a deadly orthodoxy that spells stagnation.

In general, wherever the educated minority is in close alliance with, or a part of, the ruling group, there evolves a social order that is stable, long-enduring, and tending toward stagnation. In such a society the masses form an unmistakable lower order, with a way of life befitting their station. If, then, the masses advance by virtue of a continued antagonism between the intellectual and the powers that be, their thanks are due not to the intellectual's altruism (which, as we have seen, is nonexistent), but to whatever force has decreed that the intellectual shall struggle, suffer, and create for the salvation of his soul.



# THE TEACHER AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES\*

*by Max Savelle*

ON JUNE 28, 1953, the National Education Association released a report of an investigation it had made of academic freedom in American schools. According to this report, which covered 522 school districts in all parts of the United States, it is clear that "the attitudes of the public today [make] for less academic freedom than was the case in 1940."

This fact is partially due to the universal American effort to stamp out communism. But the diminution of academic and intellectual freedom here recorded involves much more than a fear of communism. The teachers who were interviewed reported that many subjects which formerly could be freely discussed in the classroom were now frowned upon and some were actually forbidden. Among these subjects were religious education, sex education, socialized medicine, local politics, race relations, the United Nations organization, and UNESCO, as well as communism.

There have been unwarranted pressures upon the teachers such as those in Houston, Texas, reported by the National Education Association on December 28, 1954. There have been petitions for censorship of textbooks presented to the state legislatures and to Congress with a shocking measure of success. The libraries have reported, and in some cases have succumbed to, powerful pressures for restrictions on the use of certain books, and some libraries have even been induced to remove books from their shelves.

In mid-January of 1955, the American Legion prevented a public showing by Muhlenberg College (in Allentown, Pennsyl-

\* Derived from an address delivered before the Puget Sound Council of Teachers of the Social Sciences, at Seattle, Washington, February 17, 1955.

vania) of certain classic Charlie Chaplin films as part of the college's public education service.

In November 1954, cadets of the United States Naval Academy and West Point were prohibited from participating in debates sponsored by the Speech Association of America on the question "Resolved that the United States should recognize Communist China." A congressman went so far as to warn the son of one of his constituents not to participate, "since quotations from your statements may embarrass you for the rest of your life."

Teachers who have invoked their constitutional right to keep silent have been suspended from their schools. Professors who associated themselves with Henry Wallace's Progressive party in 1948 have been discharged, and graduate students in schools of education have been warned that they could not be recommended for school jobs because of their activities in that same political campaign.

The Denver, Colorado, school board in December 1952 unanimously approved a set of criteria for new textbooks, including (1) that "so far as can be ascertained, the author supports the principles of American constitutional government" and (2) that "the nature and content of the material are consistent with the principles of the American constitutional government."

These are some of the facts. It should be noted that there are reports of investigations which purport to show the contrary, and there have been statements by prominent men that teachers and the schools have nothing to fear. However, the weight of the evidence seems to demonstrate convincingly that there is as little genuine intellectual freedom in this country today as at any other period in the nation's history.

## II

If the diminution of intellectual freedom were confined only to the schools, and did not extend to the rest of our society, the problem would be serious enough. But the pressures brought to bear upon the schools are paralleled and supported elsewhere on the American scene.



We are all familiar with the distortion of American intellectual freedom by the congressional investigations of "Communism," "un-Americanism," and "subversion." And we are all familiar with the Reece Committee report, issued December 18, 1954, which described the great educational foundations as "a powerful interlocking 'intellectual cartel' " devoted to promoting internationalism and socialism (described in the report as a "far greater menace" than communism).

Investigations and reports, of course, if not crystallized into legislation, are in the nature of ephemera and do not of themselves have any significant, concrete, or lasting effect. But actual laws that become part of the permanent statutes are a different matter. Consider, for example, the Smith Act of 1940 and the McCarran Act of 1950.

Of the Smith Act, Mr. Justice Hugo Black, of the United States Supreme Court, had this to say in his dissent in the Dennis case (1951):

The indictment is that they [the Communist leaders] conspired to organize the Communist Party and to use speech or newspapers and other publications in the future to teach and advocate the forcible overthrow of the Government. No matter how it is worded, this is a virulent form of prior censorship of speech and press, which I believe the First Amendment forbids. I would hold Section 3 of the Smith Act authorizing this prior restraint unconstitutional on its face and as applied. . . .

So long as this Court exercises the power of judicial review of legislation, I cannot agree that the First Amendment permits us to sustain laws suppressing freedom of speech and press on the basis of Congress' or our own notions of mere "reasonableness." Such a doctrine waters down the First Amendment so that it amounts to little more than an admonition to Congress.

Mr. Justice W. O. Douglas, also in a dissenting opinion, said: "... never until today has anyone seriously thought that the ancient law of conspiracy could constitutionally be used to turn speech into seditious conduct."

The McCarran Act (the Security Act of 1950) was passed over President Truman's veto. With regard to that Act, Mr. Truman said: "The application of the registration requirements to Communist-front organizations can be the greatest danger to free-

dom of speech, press and assembly, since the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798."

Under the McCarran Act, restrictions were placed upon the use of the mails by citizens who were members of the Communist party or of so-called "Communist Front" organizations. The Attorney-General was empowered to designate such organizations, and an Internal Security Board was created to hear protests against his designations. At the same time, the law provided that, upon the President's declaring an "internal security emergency," the executive should be authorized to arbitrarily arrest and detain in concentration camps citizens who—on the basis, presumably, of "derogatory" information collected *in advance* by the Federal Bureau of Investigation—might be suspected of "disloyalty." Once in a detention camp, detained persons may be allowed to clear themselves and their reputations—if they can. As this law has operated in practice, according to former Senator Harry Cain, American intellectual freedom has been seriously abused.

These laws, considered along with the McCarran-Walters Immigration Act, the outlawing of the Communist party, and other measures which have received less attention, make it clear that Congress, in an attempt to protect the nation from enemies that it fancied existed in our midst and at our gates, has legislated into being a series of institutional limitations upon intellectual freedom. And the two great political parties have scrambled all over each other, often in a most undignified fashion, to outdo each other in hunting up instances of "disloyalty."

The executive branch of our government, caught in the security hysteria, has been just as active as Congress in suppressing intellectual freedom in the broadest sense. And like Congress it has done so in the name of a "loyalty" that nobody has ever taken the trouble to define accurately.

Under President Truman's Executive Order of November 28, 1946, and subsequent orders by him and Mr. Eisenhower, the F.B.I. collects what is called "derogatory" information about applicants for government jobs and others and furnishes it to loyalty boards engaged in "screening" prospective government personnel.



Lately the F.B.I. has apparently been furnishing "derogatory" information about prospective teachers to state school systems.

This information is of two types: (1) reports of suspicious actions and remarks by the person concerned; and (2) reports of his associations with persons who have spoken freely in public on questions of a controversial nature or who, for other reasons, are suspected by the F.B.I. of being "security risks." This evidence is collected silently, often secretly. It is not shown to the person derogated by it, and of course he is not permitted to defend himself against it, except if he should apply for a government job. Yet the F.B.I. pre-judges it to be "derogatory"—otherwise it would not be submitted to the loyalty boards—and it is upon the basis of these files, presumably, that in a time of "internal security crisis" American citizens will be arrested and thrown into concentration camps under the McCarran Act of 1950.

The F.B.I.'s director, Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, has often publicly encouraged the citizens of this nation to report to him or to his agents "unusual" or "suspicious" conduct on the part of their fellow citizens. Such instruction from the chief of our national secret police, coupled with such knowledge as the public may have of the F.B.I.'s other operations, must inevitably have the effect of discouraging Americans from saying what they really think, especially when strangers are present. Many teachers, especially, have felt that fear.

The policies and the practices of the State Department should also be considered. For years the State Department has felt itself empowered to withhold passports from American citizens wishing to travel abroad, whenever, in the Department's opinion, for such persons to travel abroad would "not be in the national interest."

Fortunately, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled unanimously on June 23, 1955, that the State Department does not have "exclusive control" over the issuance of passports. The decision of the court stated that all citizens have a "natural right" to travel abroad, and that the State Department may not deny a passport without "due process of law." Even so, a citizen whose beliefs and motives are questioned by the State

Department faces a legal battle to establish his right to a passport.

The State Department has also denied visas to foreign scholars and scientists, thereby depriving American students of contact with some of the most distinguished minds in the world.

The Department of Justice has also fallen under the sway of the "loyalty" hysteria; it has even hired as witnesses against accused citizens persons whose records, impartially considered, are a great deal spottier than those of the accused.

The armed forces, too, have taken up the hue and cry with their exaggerated screening program for prospective personnel, and with repeated instances of penalizing men for things they said or did before they enlisted.

State governments have in some instances rivaled the federal government in restricting freedom. New York's notorious Feinberg Law, upheld by a 6-3 decision of the United States Supreme Court, strikes a profound blow at the status of the teacher. The basic principle in the majority opinion was that the state has the constitutional right to protect the minds of public school children from subversive propaganda.

In dissent, Mr. Justice Douglas said that this law "turns the school system into a spying project. . . . There can be no real academic freedom in that environment." He added: "Supineness and dogmatism take the place of inquiry. A 'party line'—as dangerous as the 'party line' of the Communists—lays hold. It is the 'party line' of the orthodox view, of the conventional thought, of the accepted approach."

Mr. Justice Black, also in a dissenting opinion, recognized this law as "another of those rapidly multiplying legislative enactments which make it dangerous . . . to think or say anything except what a transient majority happen to approve at the moment":

. . . basically these laws rest on the belief that Government should supervise and limit the flow of ideas into the minds of man. The tendency of such governmental policy is to mould people into a common intellectual pattern. Quite a different governmental policy rests on the belief that Government should leave the mind and spirit of man absolutely free . . . in the belief that the best views will prevail. This policy of freedom is in my judgment



embodied in the First Amendment and made applicable to the states by the Fourteenth.

Because of this policy public officials cannot be constitutionally vested with powers to select the ideas people can think about, censor the public views they can express, or choose the persons or groups people can associate with. Public officials with such powers are not public servants; they are public masters.

All of these actions, policies, and laws show that the government of the United States, however good its intentions, has sanctioned a course that significantly diminishes intellectual freedom.

### III

There has been, of course, some reaction against this trend. The presidents of Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, and other universities have warned against the dangers to American democratic freedom inherent in it. Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and a number of clergymen have protested against it. Many enlightened school administrators have courageously encouraged their teachers to discuss controversial subjects in their classrooms and have stood firm against outside pressures to interfere with good teaching. But those who protest seem to be in a minority.

For the fact seems to be that the government is not imposing these limitations upon an unwilling people; on the contrary, the people—many of them, at least—are demanding the limitations. The pressures brought to bear upon the schools and the teachers and the libraries seem to have the approval of the majority of the people. We appear to be witnessing the phenomenon that de Tocqueville, Bryce, and other students of our government anticipated: a tyranny of the majority in the realm of ideas. We appear to be approaching, if we have not already embraced, a sort of democratic totalitarianism, a religion of accepted orthodoxy, any deviation from which, in any direction, constitutes "subversion." Apparently, the people, far from fearing the restriction of freedom, actually desire it.

It is a well-known psychological and historical fact that many men, perhaps most, find intellectual security in crowds. They con-

form to the herd because they feel safer there. They prefer anonymity; they are glad to have their leaders do their thinking for them. Also, they feel a blind antagonism toward the dissenter because he appears to them, in their limited perspective, to threaten the institutions, the ideology, even the very mob itself, that provide them with security.

The American people seem to be gravitating toward a set of fixed, inflexible values, loyalties, and creeds. We are penalizing those who differ, even the most loyal of all our citizens, those who have the courage to oppose this intellectual strangulation.

This phenomenon of intellectual collectivism is not, of course, peculiar to America. Everywhere the twentieth century has seen the evolution of the national society into a monolithic body politic in which the individual tends to lose his identity. Yesterday in Germany, Italy, and Argentina, today in the Soviet Union, China, Yugoslavia, Spain, and several South American countries, this type of state, intellectually collectivized and permitting little or no dissent or criticism, has been in power. Since these states contain more than half the people on the earth, totalitarianism may tentatively be called the norm in the twentieth century, rather than the exception.

Even in the democratic countries the collectivization of thought has proceeded at a surprising pace. The democratic societies tend to become less and less aggregations of individuals, and more and more great federations of large, organized interest groups—labor unions, veterans' organizations, farm blocs, patriotic societies, manufacturers' associations—who speak as groups and not as individuals. Within these groups, indeed, individual dissent is discouraged, even suppressed, sometimes violently.

Our society is in fact, and to a degree little realized, already collectivized. Our economy is distinguished by great collectives called corporations and labor unions. Our political life is conducted by two great parties who make our political platforms and name our governing officials for us; those who are associated with the so-called "splinter" parties are regarded as being either harmless crackpots or dangerous subversives. Our society is charac-



terized by a myriad of social groups and clubs, each with its own cause or program.

Such a collectivization of thought has some impressive justifications. If, the standard argument runs, the safety—the very existence—of our society, in this age of the hydrogen bomb, may depend upon the loyalty of a single citizen, are we not justified in taking extreme precautions against having any one of our citizens become disloyal and betray us to a potential enemy? This argument cannot be dismissed, and certainly should not be laughed off; what must be remembered, however, is that hydrogen bombs are not the only form of destruction, nor subversion the only form of betrayal.

As the population of the country grows and comes to be even more closely compressed, one member upon another, and as all absorb the same intellectual fare that comes to them in the newspapers, in the movies, and on radio and television, a growing intellectual uniformity is inevitable. Add to this the psychological tendency for people so closely bound together to raise common emotional symbols in their heroes and their leaders, and you are in the presence of a deep and powerful historical fact, one that is more nearly irresistible internally, and potentially more explosive, in terms of relations between societies, than any social phenomenon ever before known in the history of civilization.

#### IV

Democracy is built upon the theory of intellectual individualism—upon the theory that every citizen can and will think through, individually, to an intelligent solution of any problem that may confront him. But we have confused the ideal of individualism with the myth of equality; and in our steady progress toward collectivized equality, the individual, and with him his individual freedom, has tended to disappear.

Time and again, in the last generation, the American people have shown a strong willingness to follow demagogues. These demagogues have generally been cheap, cynical, unprincipled, and unscrupulous, and their misdeeds have been known to the voters, yet they have commanded the support of millions.

It is not our political leaders that will save us; demagoguery is all too often their own stock in trade. There is a little bit of the demagogue in nearly every politician, even the best, and there are also votes in masses, especially in masses made up of men and women who think alike.

The businessmen can scarcely be expected to save the tradition of American radicalism, if only because they are interested primarily in business success, and business success means the mass market. The labor unions, though an outgrowth of radicalism, have thrived by presenting a monolithic front, and they are therefore no more likely to encourage dissent in their own ranks in the future than they have been in the past.

Some religious leaders have stood up against the encroachments of democratic totalitarianism, but they have been far too few to stem the tide. Nor is the problem, in the last analysis, their responsibility.

Whose responsibility is it, then? Who can and will provide leadership and direction in the realm of ideas and of the spirit? Who but the trained intellects—the scholars, educators, and teachers generally, and the social scientists in particular.

We require that our teachers be trained, and we are gradually raising the standards of training. But where the military, the scientists, and the businessmen have put a premium upon leadership, the schools have fallen into the tendency to follow the rest of society, rather than to lead it. Many a teacher and many a school board have acceded to the mob spirit in the totalitarian movement. Many, indeed, have joined in with enthusiasm: "There goes the mob; I am its leader; I must follow it!"

It is precisely in the area of education that our society most desperately needs leadership.

For education is not, and should never be, for merely practical ends. Training for the practice of medicine or for business, for military service, and even for physics and chemistry, except for a very few experimenters and theorists, is primarily practical. Education, on the other hand—true education—is concerned with the human mind and the human spirit. It is concerned not with train-



ing a student for a specific job but with deepening his understanding of life and of society. It is because education has forgotten this, its mission—it is because educators have concentrated so heavily upon the practical and the vocational at the expense of the spiritual side of education—that American values today are what they are.

We have produced a nation of high-grade mechanics. But, excellent as that may be, that is not enough. The survival and the progress of civilization demand a race of men who are at home in the transcendental realm of ideas and understanding, of ethics and esthetics. We must not be satisfied to live by our hands alone; we must try once more to live according to the prompting of our minds, our hearts, and our souls.

## v

What can the teacher do about all this—particularly the teacher of the social sciences?

There are several things he may and should do.

In the first place, the teacher must insist upon his rights, privileges, and responsibilities as a citizen. We teachers did not surrender our citizenship, or become second-rate citizens, when we became teachers. On the contrary, since we are trained to understand social phenomena, it is for us to speak more clearly, more forcibly, and more often, than our fellow citizens. If our people or our government seems to be accepting mediocrity and intellectual totalitarianism, we should be the first to speak out. Since results are achieved by group power and action in our society, we must face the necessity of using our collective power to compel the attention of our fellow citizens—provided, always, that any such group program never be allowed, even for a moment, to cause any one of us to feel less free to offer his personal views upon any subject.

In the second place, the social science teacher should see to it that he is trained, first of all and above all, to be a social scientist. If the teacher is to lead society, he must understand society's

problems. His training as a teacher should follow—not precede or replace—his training as a social scientist.

In the third place, the teacher should concentrate on teaching the actual *facts* of economics, sociology, political science, or history to his students—not because facts are valuable in themselves, but because creative thinking cannot be done without them. A citizen without a knowledge of the facts is the perfect empty-headed, uncritical puppet for the demagogue. He is the perfect “sucker.”

Finally, the teacher must lead, coax, or drive students into the habit of thinking for themselves. The greatest failure of American education has been its failure to train critical, individual thinkers. Democracy is built upon the proposition that men can and will think, and that the decisions of the majority, as a consequence, will be wise. One of the most repulsive educational shibboleths of our time is the idea that the primary purpose of the school is to help the child “adjust to the group.” Let us forget “adjustment to the group” for a while, and encourage individual genius where we find it. Above all, let us demand that every student in our schools study, debate, and think about controversial questions.

# IS INDIA'S ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS MISUNDERSTOOD?

*by Palayam M. Balasundaram*

THREE summers ago, with an Israeli, a German, and another Indian, I took an automobile trip across the United States. The German and I were entertained in an American home at Los Angeles. The first morning at breakfast our hostess remarked, "The room where you slept was once my son's room; he was killed in World War II. I've dedicated his room to entertaining visitors from other lands."

The words of the Los Angeles hostess are still fresh in my mind, because they constantly remind me of the hopes of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our Prime Minister of India. Americans and Indians alike want international understanding and peace more than anything else in this world.

More recently, I visited another American family in a New York suburb. Discussion centered around an editorial in a local newspaper, under the heading "Jawaharlal Nehru's Doubtful Neutrality." Among other things, the editor observed that "The hysterical welcome given Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India in Moscow should not be surprising. For the man has long been pro-Russian and anti-American. . . ." The editorial added that Nehru's dislike of the British is carried over to America because of her ties with Britain; it ended with a bitter criticism of Nehru for accepting American technical aid for his people without even remaining a "good neutral."

These two personal experiences are typical of many that Indian visitors go through in the United States. Divergent viewpoints, we learn quickly, are not uncommon in a democracy.

When I was a student in Madras a decade ago, the Indian people looked to the United States for moral support in the cause of their freedom. Indian schoolboys admired the United States as a country



with genuine sympathy for people fighting for their freedom. Although England might be America's close ally, a cordial relationship, nevertheless, existed between India and the United States.

After Indian independence in 1947, relations between India and the United States became strained. No one can pinpoint exactly when or how the misunderstanding started. Americans now believe that India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Nehru, is becoming more sympathetic to communist countries to the detriment of democracies. It puzzles them that India appears to be siding with the communists, especially when the United States is helping her with economic assistance to raise her living standards. And the Indians feel that the United States has become anti-Nehru and is trying to exact an unreasonable price for its technical aid. These feelings have become so strong on both sides that India and the United States are in danger of losing sight of two great ideals that unite them: their common faith in democratic institutions and their ingrained dedication to the betterment of all human beings.

India and America share the basic objective of winning world peace and retaining freedom of thought and action. If each of them can but accept the basic differences in the philosophy and methods by which each won independence from a common master, their common objective today may be more clearly perceived. America won her freedom in the eighteenth century by war; India achieved hers almost two centuries later through passive resistance made dynamic under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Though their objective—freedom from foreign rule—was identical, their methods were different. Neither has a right today to expect that the methods used by the other in driving toward world peace and human freedom will or need be the same as its own.

## II

The foreign policy of India cannot be considered in a vacuum. Like a tree, it has its history, its roots deep in the soil. India's foreign policy grows out of the conditions under which she emerged as a full-fledged nation. Influences shaping her present policy are in her roots: in the struggle for freedom from British rule; in her

democratic ideals, her faith in the objectives of the United Nations; her repudiation of colonialism; her constant urge for world peace and coexistence; and above all, in the philosophy of life which has never emphasized materialism—the philosophy which idealizes things of the spirit.

Against this background, then, let me try to answer some of the questions constantly put to me by American friends. For instance, I'm asked: "Why does Nehru throw his weight to the side of the communists?"

The truth is that Nehru does not throw his weight to the side of the communists any more than to the side of noncommunists. He wishes India, as a new nation, to be a friend of all nations, irrespective of ideologies. Basic to his present foreign policy is nonalignment and noninvolvement in disputes between any two countries. This policy means neither "a lack of sense of responsibility toward world affairs," nor "a supine desire for noninvolvement." It is designed simply to maintain India's freedom in her outlook, her freedom to make decisions independently of pressure groups. This policy has been frequently misunderstood in the United States.

Prime Minister Nehru himself held before his people the example of the American government in its early existence. Explaining his policy before the Indian Parliament on March 17, 1950, he reminded his listeners of the conflicts that afflicted the Western world one hundred and fifty years ago. "Having achieved independence by breaking off from the British Empire," Nehru told his Parliament, "it [the United States] avoided being involved in the chaotic situation of Europe—although it doubtless had its particular sympathies because that was the natural thing . . ." He went on to state that as noninvolvement had been wise for the infant American government, it was also a wise and natural policy for his own country with its newly attained independence.

Viewed in this light, India's present position is comparable to that of America one hundred and fifty years ago.

Nehru's recent visits to Communist China and the Soviet Union have caused many in the United States to think that India is becoming more sympathetic toward communist countries and less so

toward the United States. The reaction of the Indian people has been quite different. Within India these visits strengthened the cause of democracy. Beforehand, the Indian communists accused Nehru of failing to meet the needs of the people. But when Nehru was received with unequaled friendship in Communist China and Russia, the Indian communists' accusation fell apart; they dared no longer oppose him tooth and nail. Further, communist propaganda against Nehru's programs to improve economic conditions has decreased considerably. Some of Nehru's critics even attribute the defeat of the communists in Travancore, once the nucleus of communist strength, to Nehru's increased popularity and the growing success of the Community Development Projects, which have awakened a new consciousness among the villagers. No one who knows Nehru believes his faith in and desire for democratic institutions in his own country has ever lessened. They know his visits to China and Russia have given him a greater understanding of those countries.

I have heard Americans speak of Nehru as being too lenient with communists within India, in spite of the fact that they are detrimental to the country's economic progress. This is not a true picture. Whenever the communists have become violent, the Indian government has not hesitated to put them down—sometimes even ruthlessly—in the interest of the nation.

Nehru himself has openly castigated the Communist party in India. He remarked, "It still thinks in terms of violence and disruption. . . . The communists have no adequate or constructive approach to India's problems. They can only bring disruption and reaction in India." These are bitter criticisms; yet Nehru believes that India should oppose the Communist party only through democratic procedures.

Some of the communists I met in Travancore in 1953 were different from the average American's conception of a Red. They seemed not to know where Russia is or who Stalin was. They had no positive program to help the country. I would describe them simply as dissatisfied people: nearly one-fifth of their state's in-



habitants were landless; employment was uncertain; the local government neglected its power to fix a minimum wage. Even land distribution would not have helped the poor farmers effectively because only a handful of persons owned more than a hundred acres. The other holdings were too small for effective parceling. Last year, coir (fiber used for making rope) exports fell sharply, bringing hardship to more than 600,000 people who worked in the coastal coir belt of Travancore. As a result, the communists made marked gains.

Prime Minister Nehru has a clear understanding of his own people, including the communists. He knows why some of his countrymen, though not fully susceptible to communism because of its variance with Indian culture, still show sympathy toward it. When the intellectuals or the common people cannot put their capabilities to the best use, they seek a new form of society. They are then attracted to communism because it seems to offer hope for social betterment. Nehru sees that this is what is happening in several parts of India, and his policies are shaped accordingly.

India's Community Development Program and the National Extension Service, under the first Five Year Plan (1951-56), have covered nearly one-fourth of the 600,000 villages in India. The objective of the program is not only to raise the crop yield of the farmer but also to help him better his day-to-day life. It may be that a village needs good roads or should develop the existing animal transport service; some villages need schools and adult education centers and library facilities; still others want to promote cottage industry or develop their housing, or even build guidance and recreation centers.

The second Five Year Plan, to begin on April 1, 1956, should be an effective answer to India's unemployment problem; the plan is, in the course of building the heavy and light industries that are vital to Indian economic development, to absorb more than 100,000 of India's educated youth every year for productive work. This would prove another blow to the communists, by further mitigating their opportunities for attracting the masses.

## III

I have been asked again, "Why, when America is giving financial assistance to India, can't India be friendly to us?" Of course, this is a pertinent question for an American taxpayer.

I don't know if any country's good will can be purchased like an engagement ring in a jewelry store. The Indian people do value the American technical aid; no Indian doubts the friendly motivation of the American people in helping to raise India's living standards. For the year 1954-55, \$12,000,000 in American aid was allocated to some of the nation-building projects, from rural community development to industrial and technical services.

But, though we accept the friendship and aid of the American people, we Indians still ask: Should we not have the freedom to be friendly (not overfriendly) with other nations with whom the United States may not see eye to eye?

Some Americans think: If you are friendly with our opponents, you are against us; you must be either completely *for* us or *against* us.

On this point, Congressman Emanuel Celler of New York, after a trip to India, told the U.S. House of Representatives on June 27, 1955: "We have been critical of India as India has been critical of us. These are the attributes of sovereignty. There have been mistakes and misunderstanding on both sides. There is a gap in India's knowledge of our tradition, of our way of life, just as there is a gap in our understanding of India and her life. We cannot dismiss the stubborn fact that India is an independent country and we cannot make her very independence the reason for withdrawal of aid. . . . If we use our material wealth as a whip to silence independent countries and by their silence make them eligible for our aid, then we will be condemned before the world as spiritually impoverished. . . ."

Some Americans fear India may meet the same fate as China, upsetting the balance of power in Asia. But the Indian leaders are alert to the international communist threat; at the same time they are confident that the Indian philosophy frustrates the growth of communism in India.

India's foreign policy is based on a stubborn desire to remain independent of both sides in the cold war. That is why its acceptance of foreign technical aid has been cautious.

For instance, when India was faced with an acute food shortage in 1952, Communist China donated \$84,000, but stipulated that the funds should be distributed through the Communist-sponsored "Famine Relief Committee" in the Andhra region of Madras State. On September 4, 1952, the Soviet Trade Unions also came out with a donation of 5,000 tons of wheat for the Andhra region, where Communists were particularly active. India refused to accept the gifts under those terms. One Indian Foreign Office spokesman declared: "We will welcome these gifts as we do assistance from any country, but it must be left to us to decide where help should go and how it should be made available."

Likewise, when there was an opportunity for India to receive military assistance from the United States along with Pakistan, India chose not to take it. India is opposed to military alliances with any country. Such alliances, she feels, may be provocative and bring retaliation. We do not question the motives and objectives of such alliances; but we fear that on balance they do more harm than good, by impinging upon national sovereignty and increasing tension.

Nevertheless, India accepted \$85,008,000 in American financial aid between 1948 and 1954-55. During the two years 1952-53 and 1953-54, United States assistance was primarily in the form of a grant, but in 1954-55 a major part of the aid was in the form of a loan. India feels that foreign aid should not be so extensive as to make her largely dependent or subservient.

Recently India decided to have an iron and steel plant built with the technical advice of Russian experts; this was purely a business deal. India will pay for the equipment she will receive from the Soviet Union.

#### IV

India's refusal of American military aid is more than a desire to remain independent. She has repeatedly expressed her view that



armaments neither prevent war, nor reduce tension. At best, they create suspicion and distrust among one's neighbors.

In line with this thinking, India still has to settle her differences with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. We believe that to eliminate tension between the two countries, India must reduce suspicion among the Pakistanis. Many international problems and disputes might thus be solved peacefully.

Still another reason for India's objection to military pacts is her distrust of their underlying ideas: the balance of power, "negotiation from strength," and the grouping of nations into rival camps. India believes peace can be established only by a friendly approach between nations and peoples. In the Indian sense, peace does not mean a simple abstention from war; rather it is an active and positive approach to international problems—an approach which is void of any threat or fear. This is the core of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy.

v

Nehru's policy of friendship with all nations, including Communist China and the Soviet Union, has already made a constructive contribution to peace and the lessening of tension among nations. Some fruits of this policy were realized by India's role in bringing about "cease-fires" in Korea and Indochina. President Eisenhower in his historic speech to the U.N. General Assembly on December 8, 1953, expressed his willingness to accept India's proposal for an informal meeting of the principal powers concerned with atomic energy.

Mr. John Sherman Cooper, American ambassador to India, addressing the Rotary Club luncheon in Calcutta on September 13, 1955, praised the efforts of Prime Minister Nehru for playing a significant and decisive role in the release of American airmen held by Communist China. "In these and other ways," observed the American ambassador, "India has made it clear that its policy gives it an opportunity to declare itself on world issues affirmatively and justly. . . ."

Another vital contribution of India to international peace and understanding was the joint statement signed by Prime Minister Nehru and Marshal Bulganin on June 23, 1955, at the end of Nehru's visit to Russia. Some observers in the United States felt that Nehru blindly signed on the dotted line a statement prepared by the Soviet leader. This is not true. As *The Times* (London) editorial put it, "He [Nehru] certainly left a memorial to his literary style and political thought, for there are whole passages of the joint statement signed by him and Mr. Bulganin which are clearly his and his alone. . . ."

Both Nehru and the Soviet Premier were alive to the dangers of nuclear warfare. They placed supreme importance on the "Five Principles of Co-existence" (the essence of the charter of the United Nations), which were incorporated in the Chinese-Indian agreement on Tibet a year ago, and have since been repeated in other Asian conferences and agreements. These principles are: territorial integrity and respect for sovereignty, nonaggression, noninterference in internal affairs, mutual benefits, and peaceful coexistence. Both Mr. Nehru and Marshal Bulganin agreed that "a wider acceptance of these principles will enlarge and pave the way for greater international co-operation. In the climate of peace thus created it will become possible to seek peaceful solutions of international questions by methods of negotiation and conciliation."

To the original words of "non-interference in each other's internal affairs" is added "for any reasons of economic, political or ideological character." This is a valuable amendment. For the Cominform can no longer function without conflicting with the assurances jointly subscribed to by Prime Minister Nehru and Marshal Bulganin. As a result, the communists must now either liquidate the Cominform or lose face.

*The Times*, in an editorial dated June 30, 1955, commented: "Too much should not be read into phrases. The Russians may think that they are chief gainers from the visit and they will make use of it in Asia to the full. But Mr. Nehru, if he is a man of ideals, is also a stubborn and proud man. He may take the words of the

statement more seriously than the Russians, and any infractions on their part may quickly lose them the goodwill they believe they have gained."

## VI

It seems to me that much of the misunderstanding among the American people about India arises indirectly out of a hysterical fear of Russian communism. Even while one talks of peace, one senses the tension in the world. Common people everywhere are carried away by propaganda and emotional and sensational statements in the press or radio. But, if the Indians and Americans appreciate each other's motivation and evaluate their thinking and actions in terms not only of their needs but also of their culture and historical background, neither of these countries will have difficulty in understanding the other.

In a democracy, we are bound to have opposing viewpoints—one seeking to promote understanding, the other tending to destroy it, though perhaps unwittingly. The intelligent public should guard against emotionalism and act as a watchdog to see that facts are presented objectively. This is a crucial test of democracy.

Despite differences in foreign policy, India and the United States are actively co-operating in many cultural and economic fields. To make this co-operation more fruitful, each must understand the points of view of the other and tolerate honest differences of opinion in international affairs, however difficult or unpleasant they may seem, at times, for both sides. In the words of Mr. John Foster Dulles, "Freedom involves diversity," and "Tolerance is basic to co-operation."



## *Professor's Progress*

RICHARD ARMOUR

Each article he wrote, though paper thin  
(And thinner still, if truth be known, within),  
He placed upon the one he wrote before,  
A slowly rising pile upon the floor.  
Each minuscule addendum, near ethereal,  
Dredged out of desiccated source material,  
Each book (one was a full two inches thick)  
He measured with his shrewd arithmetic  
And placed upon the others there below  
And proudly watched the paper pillar grow.  
Then mounting quickly with expectant smile  
And careful step the scholar's precious pile,  
He stood at last triumphant on its tip  
And reached, and plucked a full professorship.

# THE VEDANTA IN CALIFORNIA: THE SWAMIS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

by Dorothy F. Mercer

**I**N 1893 a young, intense Bengali was introduced to the United States at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Swami Vivekananda had come to this country to represent Hinduism. He stayed for almost four years, and aroused so much enthusiasm that when he left, Vedanta centers in New York and California had been established.

This fresh manifestation of an ancient religion grew out of the powerful teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, who was born in 1836 in a small Bengali village. He had religious experiences through many aspects of Indian faith, notably Advaita Vedanta, before he was introduced to Christianity and Mohammedanism. Then, following the 3,500-year-old statement of the *Rig Veda*—"Truth is One; sages call It by various names"—he studied these two religions, and proved the traditional axiom by visions of the spirit through Christian and Mohammedan disciplines.

"Wherever I look," Sri Ramakrishna said, "I see men quarreling in the name of religion—Hindus, Mohammedans, Brahmos, Vaishnavas . . . , they never reflect that He who is called Krishna is also called Siva, and bears the name of the Primal Energy, Jesus, and Allah as well—the same Rama with a thousand names."

The philosophy of the Vedanta has been summed up by Christopher Isherwood (*Vedanta for the Western World*, The Marcel Rodd Company, New York, 1946) as follows: "First, that man's real nature is divine. Second, that the aim of human life is to realize this divine nature. Third, that all religions are essentially

Dr. Mercer has written this article as an answer to statements about the Vedanta in California which were made by Robert V. Hine in his "Cult and Occult in California" which appeared in the Summer 1954 issue of *The Pacific Spectator*.

in agreement." Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated in his person, perhaps to a greater degree than any other seer or saint, this essential oneness of the world's religions.

Before his death in 1886 Sri Ramakrishna informally started what was later to be known as the Ramakrishna Order, but it was not formally established until Swami Vivekananda's first return from America in 1897. As the Order grew under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda, it combined the ideal of seeking God through the renunciation of worldly desires and possessions with the obligation to render various services to the community. In 1909, the trustees of the Ramakrishna Math in Belur, near Calcutta, generally the spiritual head of the Order, became legally the governing body of the social service part, generally known as the Ramakrishna Mission. The Mission has concerned itself with relief work during floods, epidemics, and famines, and has also established hospitals, libraries, publishing houses, high schools, and industrial and agricultural schools. In 1941, it opened a college, which is affiliated with the University of Calcutta.

The swamis in America are directly responsible to the Ramakrishna Math. They have no central head in the United States in general, or in California in particular. Each center is an independent, self-sustaining unit, governed by its members, who are all American citizens. The swamis, coming as they do on invitation, are guest teachers rather than missionaries. They own nothing and maintain themselves through the pleasure of the membership. The number of members of each center varies and is largely dependent on the appeal made by the individual swami.

Because the unequivocal stand of the Vedanta does not lend itself to sentimental compromise and is not very palatable, after the initial wonder, to an outgoing temperament like the American, the membership has never been large. Concentrating on the individual, the swami does not take more students than he can handle personally. He makes no effort to advertise, and is not, in the American sense, an active member of his community. Actually, his students seek him; he does not seek them.

Dedicated to helping people apprehend the one Truth which



Sri Ramakrishna had experienced so variously, the Vedanta centers in California were founded by Swami Vivekananda and have maintained themselves for fifty-seven years. Although the swamis lecture to hundreds every week, actual members in California number only about 550. In 1910 there were some 300; in 1915, the nadir, there were perhaps 100. At the present writing there are four Hindu Ramakrishna monks in California.

Renouncing the world and living the life of the spirit seems to erase the rubber stamp of social, economic, and political patterns and to allow rich individual development. The swamis' singular diversity is one of their powers: no two are alike in personality, teaching methods, or lecturing.

The dynamic power of Swami Vivekananda was never forgotten by those who heard him, and his broad and deep spirituality was a hope and a promise for those who knew him. In a lecture given in San Francisco on March 23, 1900, he told the Vedantin how to pray:

*Blessed am I  
That know this moment  
That I shall be free all eternity; . . .  
That no nature  
No delusion  
Has any hold on me . . .  
For I know myself.  
I am the Infinite . . .  
How can there be death for me?  
Or birth?  
Whom shall I fear?  
I am the One.  
Shall I be afraid of myself? . . .  
What do I care if the mind is controlled  
Or uncontrolled? . . .  
I am not the mind . . .  
I am the soul, the ever free . . .  
Time is in me,  
Not I in time . . .*

Vivekananda lived what he preached. Full of compassion for the physical debility of his people, he felt that India could learn a great deal from America's scientific and technological knowledge, social organization, and comparatively poverty-free people. He believed, in turn, that America could profit from the teachings of the Vedanta, and he visualized a synthesis of science and religion which would lift the poverty of both body and spirit.

His yearning was so great for this exchange of gifts between the East and the West that he preached the Vedanta from coast to coast, frequently under very trying and difficult circumstances. The American people responded to his personality with such enthusiasm that Vivekananda returned to India a hero. He died in 1902, two years after his final visit to the United States.

Both Los Angeles and San Francisco had a small nucleus of students when Vivekananda left California, and Swami Turiyananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, came to instruct them. Turiyananda taught mostly at the Shanti Ashrama, a 160-acre retreat near Mt. Hamilton, which had been given to Vivekananda. Turiyananda stayed in California for about two years, long enough to cement the work commenced by Vivekananda.

Swami Turiyananda's method was almost exclusively personal. He delivered scarcely any lectures, but, taking a few students, he trained these intensively in the discipline of meditation. On leaving California he was asked if he had accomplished his mission. He answered: "Yes. I leave here one who is on the way to reaching illumination." Turiyananda believed that if he could help *one* human being to realize God in this life, he would not have lived in vain. His work in California and India was singularly productive, and by training many second-generation monks who are today teaching in the West as well as in his native land, Turiyananda proved himself one of Sri Ramakrishna's most fertile spiritual sons.

Then there came to San Francisco another of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples, Swami Trigunatitananda. Better known as Trigunatita, he taught and lectured in San Francisco for twelve years, from January 1903 to the end of 1914. He built the first Temple of the Vedanta in the Western world, and this Temple is still being

used by the Vedanta Society of Northern California. He also established a sort of Brook Farm in Concord, Contra Costa County, which, like Brook Farm itself, was financially unsuccessful.

Swami Trigunatita was an impressive ascetic. He held services continuously for eighteen hours on Ramakrishna's Birthday and Christ's Birthday. He conducted a voluminous correspondence, lectured twice a week to the general public, gave courses in Sanskrit, meditation, and the Upanishads, saw his numerous students privately on an average of once every two weeks, and thereby reduced his sleeping time to an hour or so a night. He even found time to play with his students' children! During November or July, from 1903 to 1914, he took those students who were able and willing to the Shanti Ashrama to train them intensively in concentration and meditation. He was killed by a religious fanatic in December 1914 while delivering a sermon.

Swami Abhedananda, the only other direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna to teach in California, stayed in San Francisco for over two years, from 1918 into 1921. He helped Trigunatita's assistant, Swami Prakashananda, carry on after Trigunatita's death.

Swami Abhedananda brought the resources of scholarship and an orderly mind to bear on his message: he pointed out that *karma* (mental or physical action plus its reaction) and reincarnation are more satisfying to the human sense of justice than other doctrines attempting to solve the problem of evil. The beginningless, endless cosmic wheel of life is more logical than an infinite future without an infinite past. The prospect of eternal punishment for temporal sin or eternal reward for temporal virtues mixes up two categories. The absolute has no meaning if any other reality exists to limit its absoluteness.

Long before university scholarship had marked the influence of the Vedanta on American thought, Abhedananda's keen eye had detected it in Emerson and Thoreau. He had seen its influence on Christian Science and had traced this influence down to early editions of *Science and Health*, where acknowledgment of it was made. He believed that *yoga* is the science of sciences, using the



term "science" (as had Vivekananda) for the method by which a person may become united with the Godhead.

Between 1914 and 1931, when the present Ramakrishna monk in charge of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, Swami Ashokananda, took over the work, four swamis in addition to Abhedananda came to San Francisco. Of these four, two returned to India; one is now in charge of the Vedanta Society of Southern California; and the other is in charge of the center in Seattle.

Since 1931, Swami Ashokananda has addressed consistently overflowing audiences at the Vedanta Temple in San Francisco. In 1938 he built a Temple in Berkeley, where his assistant lectures and conducts classes. He established two monasteries, one in San Francisco and one near Inverness, Marin County, and has recently opened a small center in Sacramento. He is now building another Temple of the Vedanta in San Francisco, the one erected by Trigunatita being inadequate to accommodate the increasing numbers of people who hear his lectures.

The eloquent and poetic lectures of Swami Ashokananda are difficult to describe. The lightning of his mind, which is ironic without depressing effect and humorous without loss of sublimity, accounts, in part, for the influence the Vedanta frequently exerts on many people who never become members of the Society. Figures alone cannot measure influence, nor can the written work convey spiritual power.

Although it was in San Francisco that the first California Vedanta center was firmly established, Vivekananda had been in Los Angeles, and both Turiyananda and Trigunatita had students there. The head of the Boston Center had established a summer retreat, the Ananda Ashrama, at La Crescenta, California, and had lectured in and around Los Angeles. But for various reasons, it was not until Swami Prabhavananda took over the work in Los Angeles in 1929 that the Vedanta Society of Southern California was put on an enduring basis.

After a very difficult start because of the peculiar mental climate in Los Angeles (he refused to lecture to "mystery mongers

and metaphysical shoppers”), Swami Prabhavananda eventually built a Vedanta Temple in Hollywood in 1938. In 1947 he established the first nunnery of the Ramakrishna Order in the world at Santa Barbara, and in 1949 he added a monastery at Trabuco Canyon, about twenty miles inland from Laguna Beach. In January of this year (1956) his Temple of the Vedanta in Santa Barbara was dedicated. Lectures and classes are conducted in Hollywood and Santa Barbara either by him, by his assistant, or by a guest speaker.

Swami Prabhavananda is psychologically astute and profoundly kind, and in the subject matter of his lectures pre-eminently practical for spiritual aspirants. Impartial love and understanding mark his teachings: no one is too young or too old for his attention, too stupid or too intellectual, too important or too inconsequential.

The Vedanta is perhaps more widely known in the West at the present time than it has ever been before. Not only are increasing numbers of people attending the lectures, but there are more publications available, many of which are a direct consequence of the Southern California Center.

Realizing early in his work in California that the spiritual classics of India should be available to the West in readable form, Swami Prabhavananda, collaborating with Christopher Isherwood, translated *The Bhagavad Gita*, or *Song of God*. With an introduction by Aldous Huxley, this work has sold 210,000 copies up to the present time.

Prabhavananda also translated *The Srimad Bhagatavam* or *Wisdom of God*, Sankara's *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*, and the principal Upanishads. Most recently, his collaboration with Isherwood resulted in *How to Know God: The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* (Harper and Brothers, New York; Allen and Unwin, London).

Since 1938 the Vedanta Press of Southern California has published a quarterly called *Vedanta and the West*. Following Vedantic tradition, people of various faiths—Catholics, Protestants, Christian Scientists—have written for it, although most of the

articles are by the swamis of the Order. Such diverse people as Jawaharlal Nehru, Vincent Sheean, Douglas Ainslie, and S. Radhakrishnan have written articles for it. Frequent contributors are Huxley, Isherwood, Gerald Heard, and John van Druten, all of whom are also editorial advisors. Western people generally have become better acquainted with the Vedanta and the Ramakrishna Order through other works of these four writers, and through their occasional appearances as guest lecturers at the Southern California Center.

The Vedanta Press publishes or is sole agent for between fifty and one hundred books at the present time. The bookshop connected with the Southern California Vedanta center stocks works of all the world's great mystics—many of which are difficult to obtain elsewhere.

Despite the sincerity and accuracy of these publications, and the time-tested eminence of Advaita Vedanta in philosophical mysticism, it has endured many distortions by the press. One article in a recent number of a 54-year-old, learned, and highly respected magazine said that the Atman (the Self or indwelling spirit of man) "is seeking to escape . . . with a view to enjoying itself in isolation for ever and ever"; and that the initial premise of the Vedanta, *aham brahmasmi* (the Absolute, or Brahman, and the Self are the same), puts the writer in the peculiar position of denying his own reality or the reality of his reader. That the next issue contained a brilliant and sharp correction or that both the original and the correction were written by Anglicans is hardly consoling to honest scholars or sincere Christians. So it is not unexpected that the words "swami" and "yoga" appearing in popular magazines are always good for an ignorant laugh.

That persecution is a common reception for those who lead a spiritual life, that it promises them "great reward in heaven," or that history exonerates them, may help to sustain the swamis, but it is scarcely encouraging to fair-minded Californians. Educated, cultivated men, the swamis have had to face segregation because of their color; general prejudice because they are "foreigners";



distortion of their religion because of fear; and ridicule because of ignorance. Gentle, sincere men; they have had to accept the defection of those they have helped. There have been Hindus who have deceitfully taken the appellation "swami" and who have taught *yoga* for their own personal aggrandizement. These men do the same type of harm as Christians who preach peace and freedom by way of the sword and the dollar.

Not only are the swamis open to numerous popular misconceptions, but they also have the hurdles of climate and custom to overcome. They must adjust to temperaments very different from theirs, to clothes which are cumbersome, to a hundred little differences which taken together amount to an obstacle of some proportion. Some of the swamis go back to India after a short stay, and many are loath to come at all. The demand has always been greater than the supply, and those who have the temerity to stay are overburdened with work.

The Vedanta is not an exclusive religion. As Vivekananda said: "The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian." Since Ramakrishna himself proved the efficacy of Christ's teachings, it would be the ultimate in folly for a swami of the Ramakrishna Order to advocate a turning away from Christ. And none does. Each swami is interested in cultivating the spiritual potential of his students, and if a weak Christian becomes a better one, the swami is content. He makes no effort to turn a Christian into a Hindu. Working desirelessly, he hopes that tolerance may be learned and that respect, without condescension, for other faiths may be derived from his teaching and example.

# THE END OF UTOPIA?

by Thomas Molnar

THERE are moments in the life of an idea when its ticking on the clock of history suddenly sounds false, as an indication that it has run a full course, and has little or nothing more to say. Such a moment seems to have arrived for the idea of revolution among French intellectuals.

Needless to say, the French have always attached a sentimental, patriotic meaning to the term "revolution," in the achievements of which they have seen their own emancipation as well as a confirmation of France's civilizing mission among the people of the earth. But in the last thirty-five years the political idea of the revolution has annexed the moral and esthetic revolt of Gide, André Breton and his Surrealists, Existentialism, and even the new Catholic left; the result has been the increasing concern of French artists and intellectuals with political matters. And given the French predilection for revolution, the concept of *engagement* could only lead toward political radicalism, if not to the very arms of the Communist party.

Between 1943 and 1949 it did not occur to anybody to ask the simple question: Why would communism—or, let us say, *only* communism—show a way toward a better society? After all, the methods of Stalin were identical with those of Hitler; and on the plane of purely economic achievements not only capitalist America but Labourite England was well in front of the Soviet system.

Myths, however, are not subject to rational interrogation. And revolution did become a myth in France, never too clear in meaning but packed with enough emotional, historical, and ideological content to replace, almost by itself, a whole program. As M. Aimé Patri wrote in 1946, "this is a revolution that everybody accepts as a necessity, without inquiring what it really means." Nonetheless, with this prestige-laden term, writers easily communicated with

fellow writers, artists with artists, and both with the public. "The revolutionary label," writes Jean Schlumberger, "lends an air of valiance to every negation . . ."

Lacking a program, the revolutionists usually mouthed the teachings of the early Marx. That these teachings were no longer applicable and were ignored by the Stalinists themselves was of little consequence; they were used only to give system to the feeling of rootlessness and solitude from which the French intellectual, despising his own bourgeois background, tried to escape. The escape took various forms: some remained in the state of *disponibilité* like Gide, others went along halfway with the conclusions of their own system and became *engagés* and progressives; a few, finally, crossed the gulf, and joined the party of the officially proclaimed revolution. What characterized them all was what J.-M. Domenach called the *inquiétude* without which, supposedly, one could not be an authentic leftist.

They shared also another, more important characteristic: a middle-class origin in the most class-conscious country of Europe. But already Gide had deserted his class, denouncing its narrow outlook; and in the 'twenties and 'thirties his initiative and teaching prompted a virtual mass exodus of the intellectuals toward a new class and a new cause. As we know, the motives underlying this shift of loyalty from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat were many and potent; even before the idea of the Popular Front fired the imagination of the intellectuals, an alliance of the political, esthetic, and literary *avant-garde* had been sealed, and in the face of the progressive fascization of the continent, this alliance was bound to affirm its leftist sympathies.

As Herbert Luethy writes in *France Against Herself*, "the left intelligentsia, . . . whose ignorance of economics is paralleled only by their doctrinal orthodoxy," were not seriously interested in piecemeal reforms of the country's economic and social structure. Reforms were too prosaic for esthetes who held action in a holy awe, and besides, the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic which had replaced their vanished Christian faith ruled out any but absolute solutions. From the early 'thirties on, the fellow-traveling intelli-



gentsia lived in daily expectation of the Marxist millenium—expecting, in the words of Maritain, the proletariat to overcome the original sin of capitalist exploitation, and become God.

Instead of clearing the atmosphere, France's experience during and just after World War II actually encouraged the utopian radicalism of the French intelligentsia. The two large leftist parties, the Communists and the Socialists, which since the days of the Popular Front had been *frères-ennemis*, openly parted company in the spring of 1947, thereby forcing the intellectuals who had supported them as a block to choose between them. Since the Socialists, more sober and careful this time, were ready for reforms, the glory of speaking with the authority of an all-explaining and all-foreseeing system remained in the Communist camp.

Even those who resisted the prestige of the Communist party itself, succumbed to its philosophy of history, and adopted its vocabulary. A messianic expectation swept through Saint-Germain-des-Prés; political programs were put together, members recruited, and manifestoes drawn up. As an example of the terminology then fashionable, let us quote from the published dialogue of Sartre and David Rousset, then engaged in creating a movement to stand above political parties, the Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire (1949). The two freshman politicians favored for France "an economic and political structure in which the State shall wither away, the intellectual and manual workers shall democratically decide on their destinies, and in which the course of history shall become rational and conscious of itself." Nothing came of this ambitious program, or, for that matter, of the supra-partisan Rassemblement; Sartre himself, who three years before had denounced any philosophy that would claim to predict the course of history, and thereby limit man's freedom, has drawn closer to the Communist party, which preaches just such a philosophy.

Under these circumstances it is legitimate to reverse, as Raymond Aron does, the well-known label, and speak of a "*gauche bien-pensante*." The orthodoxy of this group, consisting at present mainly of the Existentialists and the so-called *Chrétiens de gauche*, reminds one, indeed, of the bourgeois before 1939 who, with the

cry "Better Hitler than Blum," were ready to ally themselves with the dictators rather than accede to legitimate social improvements, and whom Bernanos denounced in *La Grande peur des bien-pensants*.

Is it possible that the French intellectual left has reached a state of ossification, characterized by the monotonous repetition of points made by Marx a hundred years ago in *The Class-Struggle in France*? It is a fact that French society, the most conservative of Europe, has not evolved so far from its position and outlook of a century ago as, let us say, British society has; the importance in France of the *situations acquises*, for example, often reaching back to the Middle Ages, is undeniably great and consequently the intellectual, impressed by the circumstances he knows best, that is those prevailing in his own country, commits the fallacy of subsuming under the catchword of capitalism realities as far apart as the American system of "permanent revolution" and France's own stagnating economy. Abhorring the latter, he irrevocably condemns the former too. Reading some texts in *Les Temps Modernes* and the *Esprit*, one is struck by the unjudicial transfer of European politico-economic terminology to American realities.

The French intelligentsia systematically ignores the fact (which is valid in France no less than in the United States) that with slow but steady improvements in his condition, the industrial worker forgets his revolutionary drive, and adapts himself to petty-bourgeois living with a gusto that puts Marxist theory to shame. It is simply not true, as Merleau-Ponty stated in *Humanisme et Terreur*, that the proletarian is a *homo universalis*, always ready for the revolutionary struggle, and representing order after the bourgeois-capitalist chaos.

At the root of the errors and faulty judgments concerning the fate of social classes and the "spirit" of history, there is a basic set of contradictions which wreck the intellectual integrity of those who are guilty of them, and render their social philosophy meaningless and sterile. Some intellectuals have come to see these contradictions. Camus, for example, was ultimately obliged to

confess the incompatibility of his philosophy (the absurdity of the human situation) with a constructive political program he had advocated in 1944, as editor of *Combat*. More recently, one of the pillars of Marxist-Existentialist doctrine, Merleau-Ponty, has reluctantly acknowledged the gap that exists between "pure thought and Communism which is action" (*Les Aventures de la dialectique*).

But most French intellectuals, especially before 1952, refused to go to the heart of the matter. They had succumbed to the temptation of the glory that the Soviet system was supposed to lavish on intellectuals, and through the purges of 1936-38 and the great awakening that followed World War II, they had remained blind to the *embourgeoisement* of the Stalinist era. As Simone de Beauvoir reproachfully writes in *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté*, "revolutionary humanism rarely accepts the tension of permanent liberation; it has created a Church in which salvation is bought by subscription to party-membership."

The French intellectuals (but in all fairness, a large part of the nation also) consider 1917 as the continuation of 1789; in their judgment the French Revolution deviated from its course by the execution of Babeuf, the first "proletarian" victim of the triumphant middle class. The Russia of Lenin and Trotsky was the land to which the spirit of 1789 was supposed to have emigrated, and by a reversal of the famous saying, every "progressive" intellectual and worker had, after 1917, two homelands: his own and the Soviet Socialist Republic.

The intellectual thus relinquished his historic role of a fighter for the separation of State and Church, since he agreed to and indeed promoted the reunification of the two in favor of a purely secular State, incarnated in Soviet Russia. The price he expected for this change of heart was the power and fame that an omnipotent, ideology-centered State could give him—for example, by mass-publishing his works and imposing them on the public. After all, even the French Republic has enlisted the services of a number of its artists and writers—Clandel, Giraudoux, and Malraux, for instance. If the Communist system proves to be less tolerant toward



its intellectuals than the easygoing Marianne, even that could be excused, especially if, as Raymond Aron suspects, "the intelligentsia prefers persecution to indifference."

The French intellectual left is, of course, aware of the criticism directed against it on theoretical (philosophical, economic, etc.) grounds, and also of the outright accusations that it has sold out to the Kremlin and separated itself from the French community. But in one sense even the possibility of a debate has been removed after the famous exchange of letters between Sartre and Camus in August 1952. Ever since, the "progressive" and the "democratic" camps have faced one another in the same unyielding manner as did the Jansenists and the Jesuits three hundred years ago. Camus, in a letter to me, actually called the attitude of his antagonists "*un jansénisme impitoyable et privé de grâce.*"

Slowly, however, a new attitude seems to be emerging behind the phalanx of the intellectual left. The reason for it may be complex; in the above-mentioned exchange of letters Sartre admitted (somewhat regretfully, one must say) that despite the accusations of being a fellow traveler, he is under constant fire from the Communist press. Indeed, the Communist neighborhood for a lively and outspoken man like Sartre may not be too comfortable. Another reason is, of course, the country's gradually restored well-being, for which, to a large extent, the Marshall Plan is responsible; the Marshall Plan which, in spite of all the bitter expectations on the left, did not conceal a secret weapon of American imperialism. A third reason is that American economy has survived the critical postwar years and the threat of depression in 1953, and that its continued prosperity seems to give the lie to those who never stopped predicting the collapse of the capitalist system. If the fact that capitalism has proved able to adjust to new conditions, and even to enlist the support of the unions, has given pause to the Kremlin itself, it can scarcely have gone unnoticed by the Kremlin's servile theorists this side of the Iron Curtain.

Under these circumstances the socialists and progressives have begun wondering if, after all, despotism and five-year plans are the

only possible methods in underdeveloped areas, let alone in a country like Czechoslovakia, for example. Is Terror absolutely necessary for accelerated industrialization? Must the people be enslaved and starved while the country reinvests a high percentage of its production into capital goods instead of satisfying the consumers' needs?

One proof that these or similar questions have been raised for some time in the editorial offices of leftist magazines is the enthusiastic reception that Tito got in these circles when he revolted against Russian overlordship. Immediately the long-buried Trotskyist arguments reappeared, a non-Soviet Communism (or rather Marxism) was hailed as the trend toward the rehabilitation of leftist theory and practice. The same hopeful expectations concentrated on Mao's China, or, for that matter, on any sign of non-conformism in the extreme-left camp.

The either/or intransigence of the cold war slowly yields to a more discerning approach, especially as the ex-colonial peoples emerge as sovereign nations. Of these, very few have chosen the Communist way, and even fewer seem to become willing preys of the Kremlin. Their practical and dignified attitude in the struggle between two world-blocks has deeply impressed many whose acquaintance with colonial problems had been through the writings of Marx and Lenin only.

Thus the extreme-radical French intellectual runs the risk of remaining out of contact with political reality abroad, and without working-class followers at home. He can, of course, always rationalize his position by declaring that the *real* interests of the working class have still but one protector, the Communist party, and that whether the majority of workers is to be found inside or outside that party is of no consequence. This rationalization, however, reveals an obvious state of alarm among the leftists.

For two decades the intellectuals managed to make enough noise to suppress in their souls the voices of metaphysical silence and the feeling of isolation. Behind their revolutionism there was, among other motives, a quest for human solidarity, a quest which, with a Malraux and a Camus, reached the sublimity of religion.

Now their temporary shelter seems to collapse around them, and once again they appear in the modest garb of the pilgrim; the revolution to be reached through the infallible advance of Communism has suddenly become uncertain, and the Party itself only the lesser of two evils. Francis Jeanson, the right-hand man of Sartre, wrote recently: "The Stalinist movement does not appear to us as an authentically revolutionary movement, but it is the only one which claims to be revolutionary, and commands the loyalty of the proletarian majority. . . . We are for this movement . . . because we think it is better for it to be imperfect than to disappear."

This tone is certainly not enthusiastic; it would seem that Communism, and with it the millenarian thinking about revolution, has become in the mind of the intellectual left what the French call a *pis-aller* (last resource). But this small concession to realism scarcely signals a retreat to the right. Many, perhaps most, French intellectuals remain convinced that it is impossible to be a partisan of revolution without an *entente* with the Communist party. To give up being a *révolutionnaire*—writes one of the leaders of the *Chrétiens de gauche*, J.-M. Domenach—"means to yield the care of reforms to technicians devoid of political conscience. These reforms, in turn, would strengthen capitalism rather than transform it."

Can this dilemma be solved? It seemed so for a moment in 1954 when Mendès-France succeeded in rallying around his dynamic personality the entire traditional left. Mendès-France is certainly not a revolutionist, but he is sufficiently close to the ideologists on the left to enter into a meaningful dialogue with them, possibly even to persuade them to tolerate his confidence in experts and technicians. But the rule of Mendès-France was an ephemeral one, and the left has now fallen back into the state of family quarrels and anxious self-interrogation. Perhaps the basic difficulty goes deeper than surface politics, deeper even than contradictions in the Communist line. Perhaps the root trouble is that the French intelligentsia, as Raymond Aron so penetratingly states, is too proud to acknowledge that the internal deadlock of the country must be blamed on a national failure, and not on the decree of history.



# HELP HER TO BELIEVE

*by Tillie Olsen*

I STAND here ironing, and what you asked of me moves tormented back and forth with the iron.

"I wish you would manage the time to come in and talk with me about your daughter. I'm sure you can help me understand her. She's a youngster who needs help and whom I'm deeply interested in helping."

"Who needs help?" Even if I came what good would it do? You think because I am her mother I have a key, or that in some way you could use me as a key? She has lived for nineteen years. There is all that life that has happened outside of me, beyond me.

And when is there time to remember, to sift, to weigh, to estimate, to total? I will start and there will be an interruption and I will have to gather it all together again. Or I will become engulfed with all I did or did not do, with what should have been and what cannot be helped.

She was a beautiful baby. The first and only one of our five that was beautiful at birth. You do not guess how new and uneasy her tenancy in her now-loveliness. You did not know her all those years she was thought homely, or see her poring over her baby pictures, making me tell her over and over how beautiful she had been—and would be, I would tell her—and was now, to the seeing eye. But the seeing eyes were few or nonexistent. Including mine.

I nursed her. They feel that's important nowadays. I nursed all the children, but with her, with all the fierce rigidity of first motherhood, I did like the books said. Though her cries battered me to trembling and my breasts ached with swollenness, I waited till the clock decreed.

Why do I put that first? I do not even know if it matters, or if it explains anything.

She was a beautiful baby. She blew shining bubbles of sound. She loved motion, loved light, loved color and music and textures.

She would lie on the floor in her blue overalls patting the surface so hard in ecstasy her hands and feet would blur. She was a miracle to me, but when she was eight months old I had to leave her daytimes with the woman downstairs to whom she was no miracle at all, for I worked or looked for work and for Emily's father, who "could no longer endure" (he wrote in his good-bye note) "sharing want with us."

I was nineteen. It was the pre-relief, pre-WPA world of the depression. I would start running as soon as I got off the street-car, running up the stairs, the place smelling sour, and awake or asleep to startle awake, when she saw me she would break into a clogged weeping that could not be comforted, a weeping I can hear yet.

After a while I found a job hashing at night so I could be with her days, and it was better. But it came to where I had to bring her to his family and leave her.

It took a long time to raise the money for her fare back. Then she got chicken pox and I had to wait longer. When she finally came, I hardly knew her, walking quick and nervous like her father, looking like her father, thin, and dressed in a shoddy red that yellowed her skin and glared at the pock marks. All the baby loveliness gone.

She was two. Old enough for nursery school they said, and I did not know then what I know now—the fatigue of the long day, and the lacerations of group life in nurseries that are only parking places for children.

Except that it would have made no difference if I had known. It was the only place there was. It was the only way we could be together, the only way I could hold a job.

And even without knowing, I knew. I knew the teacher that was evil because all these years it has curdled into my memory, the little boy hunched in the corner, her rasp, "why aren't you outside, because Alvin hits you? that's no reason, go out coward." I knew Emily hated it even if she did not clutch and implore "don't go mommy" like the other children, mornings.

She always had a reason why we should stay home. Momma, you look sick, momma. I feel sick. Momma, the teachers aren't there today, they're sick. Momma there was a fire there last night. Momma it's a holiday today, no school, they told me.

But never a direct protest, never rebellion. I think of our others in their three-, four-year-oldness—the explosions, the tempers, the denunciations, the demands—and I feel suddenly ill. I stop the ironing. What in me demanded that goodness in her? And what was the cost, the cost to her of such goodness?

The old man living in the back once said in his gentle way: "You should smile at Emily more when you look at her." What *was* in my face when I looked at her? I loved her. There were all the acts of love.

It was only with the others I remembered what he said, so that it was the face of joy, and not of care or tightness or worry I turned to them—but never to Emily. She does not smile easily, let alone almost always as her brothers and sisters do. Her face is closed and somber, but when she wants, how fluid. You must have seen it in her pantomimes, you spoke of her rare gift for comedy on the stage that rouses a laughter out of the audience so dear they applaud and applaud and do not want to let her go.

Where does it come from, that comedy? There was none of it in her when she came back to me that second time, after I had had to send her away again. She had a new daddy now to learn to love, and I think perhaps it was a better time. Except when we left her alone nights, telling ourselves she was old enough.

"Can't you go some other time mommy, like tomorrow?" she would ask, "will it be just a little while you'll be gone?"

The time we came back, the front door open, the clock on the floor in the hall. She rigid awake. "It wasn't just a little while. I didn't cry. I called you a little, just three times, and then I went downstairs to open the door so you could come faster. The clock talked loud, I threw it away, it scared me what it talked."

She said the clock talked loud that night I went to the hospital to have Susan. She was delirious with the fever that comes before



red measles, but she was fully conscious all the week I was gone and the week after we were home when she could not come near the baby or me.

She did not get well. She stayed skeleton thin, not wanting to eat, and night after night she had nightmares. She would call for me, and I would sleepily call back, "you're all right, darling, go to sleep, it's just a dream," and if she still called, in a sterner voice, "now go to sleep Emily, there's nothing to hurt you." Twice, only twice, when I had to get up for Susan anyhow, I went in to sit with her.

Now when it is too late (as if she would let me hold and comfort her like I do the others) I get up and go to her at her moan or restless stirring. "Are you awake? Can I get you something?" And the answer is always the same: "No, I'm all right, go back to sleep mother."

They persuaded me at the clinic to send her away to a convalescent home in the country where "she can have the kind of food and care you can't manage for her, and you'll be free to concentrate on the new baby." They still send children to that place. I see pictures on the society page of sleek young women planning affairs to raise money for it, or dancing at the affairs, or decorating Easter eggs or filling Christmas stockings for the children.

They never have a picture of the children so I do not know if they still wear those gigantic red bows and the ravaged looks on the every other Sunday when parents can come to visit "unless otherwise notified"—as we were notified the first six weeks.

Oh it is a handsome place, green lawns and tall trees and fluted flower beds. High up on the balconies of each cottage the children stand, the girls in their red bows and white dresses, the boys in white suits and giant red ties. The parents stand below shrieking up to be heard and the children shriek down to be heard, and between them the invisible wall "Not To Be Contaminated By Parental Germs or Physical Affection."

There was a tiny girl who always stood hand in hand with Emily. Her parents never came. One visit she was gone. "They

moved her to Rose Cottage," Emily shouted in explanation, "They don't like you to love anybody here."

She wrote once a week, the labored writing of a seven-year-old. "I am fine. How is the baby. If I write my leter nicly I will have a star. Love." There never was a star. We wrote every other day, letters she could never hold or keep but only hear read—once. "We simply do not have room for children to keep any personal possessions," they patiently explained when we pieced one Sunday's shrieking together to plead how much it would mean to Emily to keep her letters and cards.

Each visit she looked frailer. "She isn't eating," they told us. (They had runny eggs for breakfast or mush with lumps, Emily said later, I'd hold it in my mouth and not swallow. Nothing ever tasted good, just when they had chicken.)

It took us eight months to get her released home, and only the fact that she gained back so little of her seven lost pounds, convinced the social worker.

I used to try to hold and love her after she came back, but her body would stay stiff, and after a while she'd push away. She ate little. Food sickened her, and I think much of life too. Oh she had physical lightness and brightness, twinkling by on skates, bouncing like a ball up and down up and down over the jump rope, skimming over the hill; but these were momentary.

She fretted about her appearance, thin and dark and foreign looking at a time when every little girl was supposed to look or thought she should look a chubby blonde replica of Shirley Temple. The doorbell sometimes rang for her, but no one seemed to come and play in the house or be a best friend. Maybe because we moved so much.

There was a boy she loved painfully through two school semesters. Months later she told me how she had taken pennies from my purse to buy him candy. "Licorice was his favorite and I brought him some every day, but he still liked Jennifer better'n me. Why mommy why?" A question I could never answer.

School was a worry to her. She was not glib or quick in a

world where glibness and quickness were easily confused with ability to learn. To her overworked and exasperated teachers she was an overconscientious "slow learner" who kept trying to catch up and was absent entirely too often.

I let her be absent, though sometimes the illness was imaginary. How different from my now-strictness about attendance with the others. I wasn't working. We had a new baby, I was home anyhow. Sometimes, after Susan grew old enough, I would keep her home from school, too, to have them all together.

Mostly Emily had asthma, and her breathing, harsh and labored, would fill the house with a curiously tranquil sound. I would bring the two old dresser mirrors and her boxes of collections to her bed. She would select beads and single earrings, bottle tops and shells, dried flowers and pebbles, old postcards and scraps, oh all sorts of oddments; then she and Susan would play Kingdom, setting up landscapes and furniture, peopling them with action.

Those were the only times of peaceful companionship between her and Susan. I have edged away from it, that poisonous feeling between them, that terrible balancing of hurts and needs I had to do between them, and did so badly, those earlier years.

Oh there are conflicts between the others too, each one human, needing, demanding, hurting, taking—but only between Emily and Susan, no, Emily towards Susan that corroding resentment. It seems so obvious on the surface, yet it is not obvious. Susan, the second child, Susan, golden and curly haired and chubby, quick and articulate and assured, everything in appearance and manner Emily was not; Susan, not able to resist Emily's precious things, losing or sometimes clumsily breaking them; Susan telling jokes and riddles to company for applause while Emily sat silent (to say to me later: that was *my* riddle, mother, I told it to Susan); Susan, who for all the five years' difference in age was just a year behind Emily in developing physically.

I am glad for that slow physical development that widened the difference between her and her contemporaries, though she suffered over it. She was too vulnerable for that terrible world of youthful competition, of preening and parading, of constant meas-



uring of yourself against every other, of envy, "If I had that copper hair," or "If I had that skin . . ." She tormented herself enough about not looking like the others, there was enough of the unsureness, the having to be conscious of words before you speak, the constant caring—what are they thinking of me? what kind of an impression am I making—there was enough without having it all magnified unendurably by the merciless physical drives.

Ronnie is calling. He is wet and I change him. It is rare there is such a cry now. That time of motherhood is almost behind me when the ear is not one's own but must always be racked and listening for the child cry, the child call. We sit for a while and I hold him, looking out over the city spread in charcoal with its soft aisles of light. "Shuggily" he breathes. A funny word, a family word, inherited from Emily, invented by her to say comfort.

In this and other ways she leaves her seal, I say aloud. And startle at my saying it. What do I mean? What did I start to gather together, to try and make coherent? I was at the terrible, growing years. War years. I do not remember them well. I was working, there were four smaller ones now, there was not time for her. She had to help be a mother, and housekeeper, and shopper. She had to set her seal. Mornings of crisis and near hysteria trying to get lunches packed, hair combed, coats and shoes found, everyone to school or Child Care on time, the baby ready for transportation. And always the paper scribbled on by a smaller one, the book looked at by Susan then mislaid, the homework not done. Running out to that huge school where she was one, she was lost, she was a drop; suffering over the unpreparedness, stammering and unsure in her classes.

There was so little time left at night after the kids were bedded down. She would struggle over books, always eating (it was in those years she developed her enormous appetite that is legendary in our family) and I would be ironing, or preparing food for the next day, or writing V-mail to Bill, or tending the baby. Sometimes, to make me laugh, or out of her despair, she would imitate happenings or types at school.

I think I said once: "Why don't you do something like this in

the school amateur show?" One morning she phoned me at work, hardly understandable through the weeping: "Mother, I did it. I won, I won; they gave me first prize; they clapped and clapped and wouldn't let me go."

Now suddenly she was Somebody, and as imprisoned in her difference as in anonymity.

She began to be asked to perform at other high schools, even in colleges, then at city and state-wide affairs. The first one we went to, I only recognized her that first moment when thin, shy, she almost drowned herself into the curtains. Then: Was this Emily? the control, the command, the convulsing and deadly clowning, the spell, then the roaring, stamping audience, unwilling to let this rare and precious laughter out of their lives.

Afterwards: You ought to do something about her with a gift like that—but without money or knowing how, what does one do? We have left it all to her, and the gift has as often eddied inside, clogged and clotted as been used and growing.

She is coming. She runs up the stairs two at a time with her light graceful step, and I know she is happy tonight. Whatever it was that occasioned your call did not happen today.

"Aren't you ever going to finish the ironing, mother? Whistler painted his mother in a rocker. I'd have to paint mine standing over an ironing board." This is one of her communicative nights and she tells me everything and nothing as she fixes herself a plate of food out of the icebox.

She is so lovely. Why did you want me to come in at all? Why were you concerned? She will find her way.

She starts up the stairs to bed. "Don't get me up with the rest in the morning." "But I thought you were having midterms." "Oh, those," she comes back in and says quite lightly, "in a couple of years when we'll all be atom-dead they won't matter a bit."

She has said it before. She believes it. But because I have been dredging the past, and all that compounds a human being is so heavy and meaningful in me, I cannot endure it tonight.

I will never total it all now. I will never come in to say: She was a child seldom smiled at. Her father left me before she was a

year old. I worked her first six years when there was work, or I sent her home and to his relatives. There were years she had care she hated. She was dark and thin and foreign looking in a world where the prestige went to blondness and curly hair and dimples, slow where glibness was prized. She was a child of anxious, not proud, love. We were poor and could not afford for her the soil of easy growth. I was a young mother, I was a distracted mother. There were the other children pushing up, demanding. Her younger sister was all that she was not. She did not like me to touch her. She kept too much in herself, her life was such she had to keep too much in herself. My wisdom came too late. She has much in her and probably nothing will come of it. She is a child of her age, of depression, of war, of fear.

Let her be. So all that is in her will not bloom—but in how many does it? There is still enough left to live by. Only help her to believe—help make it so there is cause for her to believe that she is more than this dress on the ironing board, helpless before the iron.



# MR. MAUGHAM AS FOOTNOTE

by Max Cosman

**P**ERHAPS the most widely known writer around today is W. Somerset Maugham, "Willy" to friends. For one thing, he has been a playwright of merit since the days of our fathers. For another, he has been among the most prolific suppliers of fiction in our own times. Indeed, a few years ago he even became an object of explosive attention, and his doings are still news any day of the week.

The cinema, as he would probably call the movies, started a chain reaction in 1949 with *Quartet*, a notable adaptation of four stories of his. The film was a genuine success, and its sponsors followed it up with *Trio*, a second group of tales, and *Encore*, a final selection. Even before *Encore* got to the public, television writers were adapting Maugham novels and stories to their medium and starting a new swell of enthusiasm for him.

The legitimate theater, unwilling to be left behind and perhaps seeing a chance to turn an honest penny, followed with *Jane* (based upon a short story), *The Sacred Flame*, and *The Constant Wife*, the last with Katherine Cornell in the lead. His publishers, too, chipped in with a new collection of his short stories and

plays, and added an assortment of other reprints. Then, just to prove that the old lion could still roar, they brought out a group of his essays under the title *The Vagrant Mood*.

Maugham's career goes back to 1899, the year in which he made his London bow. *Liza of Lambeth*, a sketch of slum life in the neighborhood where he was studying medicine, was neither callow nor profound, but it was characteristically workmanlike. The kudos it received gave him visions of a future other than that of medical practice, but he nonetheless finished his training at St. Thomas' and properly became a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons and a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians. By that time he was busy with another novel, a play, and some stories, and the doctor in him quietly lapsed. To those who wonder what he might have been had he remained in medicine, this can be said: undoubtedly he would have been a worthy practitioner. The drive in his nature would have seen to that.

If his novitiate be discounted, it may be said that his career has been very successful; again and again, like his American counterpart Mar-

quand, he has been a sure seller. His good fortune was more merited than less favored writers may fancy. He did not wait for breaks. He reached people because he studied how best to please them. He was forever taking the pulse of public interest, inferring need from symptom, and writing prescriptions accordingly. When people wanted to be wrung by lower-class misery, in the manner of Gissing and Morrison, he gave them *Liza*. When they became interested in the analysis of middle-class relationships — Bennett and Wells the leaders now — he gave them *Mrs. Craddock*. When readers in droves turned to the autobiographical novels of Lawrence, Beresford, and Mackenzie, he obliged with *Of Human Bondage*.

There are some who despise writing done to order, but this attitude is scarcely justified by the history of letters. The greatest Greek dramatists, for example, often worked on set themes, and more than one leading English poet has written sublime verse to a patron's specifications. Even on lesser levels of creativity, achievement takes no denial from circumstances. For Maugham, as has been pointed out, circumstance was public taste, and he adhered to it without let. It was certainly not in his way in *Moon and Sixpence*, which capitalized on public interest in Gauguin, or in *Cakes and Ale*, which had its inception in the death of Thomas Hardy.

In writing his plays he was no less influenced by the voice of the

populace. When it doted on the ingenuities of Jones and Pinero and Barrie, he delivered a series of entertainments ranging from *Mrs. Dot* to *The Land of Promise*. And when audiences matured under the tutelage of Galsworthy and Shaw, he altered his contribution too: wisecracks changed to wit and figurines came alive, as *The Circle* and *Our Betters* testify.

Novels and plays did not take up all his efforts. Early in his career he had put out some short stories under the title *Orientalisms*. An apprentice collection, it offered a diversity of wares as if probing for a bid to continue in the medium. None was received, so he went ahead with the kind of work he knew to be acceptable. He did not bide his time in vain; two decades later, his patience was rewarded. Weary of war (World War I had just ended) and eager for something to take them away from a bankrupt civilization, people reached out for accounts of distant paradises. Polynesia was a favorite. It had been advertised even before the holocaust—by Jack London, and before him by Stevenson, Stoddard, and Melville. The war over, it was being publicized anew by Frederick O'Brien in *White Shadows in the South Seas*.

Maugham saw his opportunity. He had been feeding magazines with odds and ends left over from *Moon and Sixpence*; putting these together, he called the result *The Trembling Leaf*. As separate items they had no appreciable effect; collected, they

stirred the reader. Public approval was immediate, and a repeat performance in *The Casuarina Tree* confirmed the author in his new laurels. He was now an accepted short story writer as well as novelist and playwright. Moving easily from form to form he kept hitting the target of public attention. High comedy in favor, he wrote *The Constant Wife*, constant in everything but Victorian behavior. War material to the fore, he produced *Ashenden*, a selection of episodes from his files as a British Agent. Back on the home front with the difficulties of the 1930's, he got out a collection of short stories called *First Person Singular*. The book had little in it of love on the dole or apples on street corners; it stuck to such perennials as virtue and bigamy.

Adherence to the topical, then, is Maugham's practice. It goes well with his nature, which, for all its rebellions, is basically conservative. Not for him the obsessiveness of a Faulkner, the disembodiment of a Virginia Woolf, the barely disguised taint of a Ronald Firbank. For him, as for his congeners everywhere, the good is what is common to human nature—what is topical, true, but at the same time fundamental.

For most people, perhaps, the most interesting of the fundamentals is love. Maugham treats it in a variety of ways. Love is brutal: in *The Narrow Corner*, Mrs. Hudson arranges to have her lover kill her husband. Love is lustful: in *Catalina*, the heroine desires her Diego as if

she were passion personified. Love is fatuous: in *Of Human Bondage*, Philip cannot put away Mildred, vile though she is.

Is the subject exhausted? By no means, says Maugham, and, like the sleight-of-hand master that he is, he draws a whole new series of rabbits from the hat: love as a Strindbergian battle (*The Theatre*); as a course that is rough (*The Explorer*); as a misery because only one of the pair does the loving (*The Painted Veil*); and, greatest tragedy of all, as something finished with, its urgency forgotten, its principals not even able to recognize each other (*Red*).

For Maugham, another fundamental is marriage. He has a great deal to say about it. Indeed, in his books someone is always going toward marital bliss or away from it, most often away. A biographic fact is pertinent here: his own union did not last. Whether or not the bitterness of that dissolution is at the bottom of his preoccupation, the fact is that he cannot get away from mismatching. In *On a Chinese Screen*, the cause of trouble for the missionaries lies in a class distinction: the husband is a gentleman but his wife is not a lady. In *The Hour Before Dawn*, grief results from a political difference: Dora is an ardent Nazi and hates her British husband. In *The Razor's Edge*, the sword between Isabel and Gray is spiritual: poor Gray has not the above-this-world aura of Larry, his competitor. Other troubles arise from incompatibility (*The Merry-Go-Round*), in-



comprehension (*Sheppey*), and miscegenation (*East of Suez*).

A third fundamental is religion, although such religion as Maugham has is more moral, sensory, mystical, or personal than doctrinal, more of a stopping at various hotels than a living in some assured home.

In the play *Caesar's Wife*, he reduces religion to a matter of approved behavior: we must do our duty, etc. In works as widely separated as *The Gentleman in the Parlour*, *Theatre*, and *Catalina*, he plumps for beauty and art. In *Don Fernando*, he reviews a roster of Spanish mystics and concludes, perhaps more intellectually than emotionally, that with mysticism there does come an awareness of the sublime, even a share in its glory.

At this stage he is close to the temper of such contemporaries as Heard and Isherwood and Huxley. He comes closer still when like them he looks over the systems of the great Eastern religions. In *The Painted Veil*, *The Narrow Corner*, and especially in *The Razor's Edge*, he all but embraces Hinduism. In *A Writer's Notebook*, however, he falls back on something that comes closer to his instincts. Creation, seen now from an agnostic and stoical standpoint, is inexplicable, life is irrational, and our end final. Ultimately we can have nothing but our individual dignity with which to confront the nothingness about us. A nihilistic position indeed, but not necessarily the last word from Mr. Maugham.

So much for his subject matter. Made up of fundamentals, it is presented in frames of expression that are equally common. Take his hedonism. Almost every other book of his praises the old prescription: life is short; eat, drink, and be merry. *Cakes and Ale* is typical. "Enjoy yourself while you have the chance," Rosie tells her jealous young lover. "We shall all be dead in a hundred years and what will anything matter then. Let's have a good time while we can."

Maugham balances his optimism with pessimism. Again and again he speaks of the futility of duties, virtues, honor, family. He is quite typical in *Christmas Holiday*, when he shows Charley Mason returning to England from a chain of experiences abroad to find everything the same except that "the bottom had fallen out of his world." There is nothing valid; everything is a fraud or a racket.

But bend far to either side as he will, Maugham has a center of gravity which inevitably swings him back to balance. The center is common sense, and out of it come the lines of force that support him. There is the one about not expecting more from people than they can give. Or, it is easy to bear calamities that are not your own. Or, marriage has authority only because extrajugal relations are tolerated. And this commonplace, none the less true for being commonplace: a pretty face outweighs sense and character. Rate the lot of these principles as

## THE SPECTATOR'S APPRAISAL

you will, they make Maugham's work thoroughly understandable to his readers.

For good enough reasons, then, he is truly a popular writer. The term, however, must be taken in a definitive and not denigratory sense. For to be popular is not necessarily to be inferior. Surely an ordinary sort of writer is one that is almost adequate to the task he sets himself. Maugham is more than that. Not only is his competence never in question; often he will surpass expectation. His weakness is not in performance but in choice of performance. He is never an experimenter, never a pioneer. He creates no new form, charts no new consciousness. He will only do well in patterns and thoughts established for him.

In this respect, to be sure, he is a professional. Keen about his work, he scrupulously observes human nature, human behavior, human motivation. The world his province, avid for people and lands, he refreshes his spirit or renews it with a poppet in a salon or a creature frayed at an outpost. And he has no finickiness about art. Art to him, as to Trollope or Wells or Bennett, is not for art's sake but for his own sake. That is why he has always treated his writings as if he were just a citizen with something to sell. As soon as he knew a product would go he proceeded to manufacture it. He even trademarked his work as a fellow businessman might. (I refer to the familiar vignette on his books. Inci-

dentally, it is a charm against the Evil Eye; his father originally brought it out of Morocco.)

Successful as Maugham's career has been, he is not of the very first rank of artists. His disqualification stems from an insistent doubt which makes hollow what he writes and how he writes. Consider his men and women in love: the Craddocks, the Driffields, the Stricklands, the Fanes, the Gosselyns, and all the rest. Note that they do not satisfy each other for long, never ultimately are content. Flawed as individuals, they are flawed as partners. Unwilling or unable to fulfill each other in rite, all too often in offspring, they live on from loss to loss, finally to go their own ways psychically, if not legally.

Maugham's style is of a piece with the materials he works in. Seeking primarily to entertain, he has developed the entertainer's manner: he is simple, lucid, and euphonious.

This formulation gives rise to two repeated notions of his: first, that no reading is worth while unless you enjoy it; second, that what counts for the fiction writer is not the esoteric but those affairs which involve a generality of men. Is it not apparent that ideas like these, unqualified by reservations and unconcerned with individual differences, would soon reduce readers, and writers too, to a diet of pulp-stuff?

Maugham's championship of what amounts to a limited intellection follows closely, then, his philosophy of entertainment; it is also the inevi-

table result of his underlying doubt of values. No wonder his work as a whole bulks no higher than that of a superior raconteur, recording scene and character but thinly, having nuance and point but little dimension, recapitulating the accepted but unable to educate us with the unknown.

His disillusionment is consistent: he has no illusions about himself, either. "I have more character than brains and more brains than specific gifts," he tells us in *The Summing Up*, and he takes it for granted that no vast importance should be attached to his writings. In the drama, as he evaluates it, he has been at home only in the traditional molds. As a fictionist he is but a teller of tales. That he is not indulging himself masochistically shows up a decade later; such baggage as he may carry into the future, he informs us in *A Writer's Notebook*, will be very slender. It will consist of two or three plays, and perhaps a dozen short stories. As for novels, the one that has been holding its own these past years may go on somewhat longer.

When a man is so prescient, it is no discourtesy to accept his judgment. Reprints and revivals certainly justify him in hoping for permanence for *The Sacred Flame* and for *The Constant Wife* and *The*

*Circle*; for a miscellany of stories like *Alien Corn*, *Red*, *Rain*, *The Kite*, *The Verger*, *Sanatorium*; and, in the matter of novels, for *Cakes and Ale* and *Of Human Bondage*.

Something of a fourth genre, strangely disregarded by him, should be added to his "baggage." It is his biographia literaria, *The Summing Up*. It may not entitle him to companionship with Marcus Aurelius or St. Augustine, but in its intimacy and inquiring spirit it gives him a place with Amiel and with Coleridge. Indeed, in some respects it is more of the man and his work, more of an indivisible unity than many other things commonly associated with him.

The evidence now in, one must still admit to a reluctance about passing adverse judgment upon Maugham; he has been giving pleasure to too many too long to be put aside as done with. Yet there are few of his things that the world cannot afford to go without. So let the die be cast: and in those gazettes of the future which list notabilities still the cynosure of tutored eyes, as his reference shrinks from chapter to page, from page to footnote, let us hope it is a large footnote that is left him, for in the light of eternity that is something too, and he has earned it.



# THE LEGACY OF LIU PUI

*by David T. K. Wong*

LIU PUI sat at his black ebony desk, silent, austere, and immobile. Although the electric radiator at the foot of his desk had already done much to dispel the coldness from the room, he sat with his hands thrust deep into the broad sleeves of his cotton-padded jacket of dark blue silk. He had been sitting like that since dinner, enveloped in a silence that somehow conveyed the quality of thought. His eyes, dark and very intense, dominated his gaunt and hollow-cheeked face. They were tragic eyes, tragic and lonely, insinuating some lingering sadness in his life. His nose was sharp and unusually high for a Chinese. It added to the severity of his features and at the same time lent his face a slightly foreign air.

Behind him, a large collection of books — mostly in English — lined the wall. The arrangement was without order, for John Stuart Mill stood between Homer and Marx and the plays of Bernard Shaw kept company with the confessions of Saint Augustine and the poems of Milton and Keats. At the opposite end of the study, to the left of the entrance, another collection of books was on

display. These volumes, imprisoned behind the glass doors of a large teakwood bookcase, were in Chinese. They included the Four Books and the Five Classics, the poems of Li Po and Tu Fu, a number of Taoist scripts, and the works of a few moderns like Lusin the satirist.

On the desk before Liu Pui was spread his writing paraphernalia. The thick round stick of ink rested like some black phallic symbol between the stone inkslab and the eight-inch-high brush container of light green porcelain. Within the container the writing brushes stood in disordered stalks, while at the center of the desk rice paper lay in a neat thin pad. Unlike most Chinese, Liu Pui had not forsaken the writing brush for the convenience of the fountain pen, for he liked to see his characters appear in bold forceful strokes rather than thin emaciated lines. To him the ability to form good characters was not just a pleasant accomplishment but a vital necessity, as important as having an honest face. Therefore he lost no opportunity in making perfect his own. Even the daily editorial for which he was responsible as a newspaper editor was

seized upon as an occasion for practicing his calligraphy. This he did each evening after dinner, before returning to his office for other work.

But tonight he made no attempt to write. He was conscious only of a nagging feeling that was at once anger, frustration, and despair. The feeling had haunted him all day, ever since that morning's meeting with the Old Tiger. The Old Tiger was his employer, an almost illiterate man who through shrewd and ruthless business transactions had built for himself an empire which now included three banks, five newspapers, two steamship companies, a dozen textile mills, and a score of other ventures. His business methods, coupled with his fierce face and characteristic growl, had early earned him his sobriquet. Working for the Old Tiger had not been pleasant for Liu Pui. It had meant involvement in the sordid world of business, a world which he detested at its best and which he saw mostly at its worst. It had meant writing under orders, praising what ought not to have been praised and decrying what ought not to have been decried. It had meant too the planting of fake items so that his employer could get a vital thirty minutes to dump some stock or to make a small fortune on the gold exchange. And to think that he had once had so many noble principles and ideals. Had it all been sheer hypocrisy or had he merely learned some different truths, like, for example, the one

that his wife loved to utter, that rice bowls could not be filled with ideals?

Thinking of these things brought that morning's meeting with the Old Tiger back to him. "There is too much clamor against the mayor. We will have to ease the pressure," the Old Tiger had said. "If he were removed from office, it would be most inconvenient. There is too much at stake. And besides, there are certain rules of conduct. The mayor is our friend and we must help our friends." Then the Old Tiger had laughed that gruff, cynical laugh which Liu Pui hated more than his usual growl.

At last Liu Pui took his hands out of his sleeves. His fingers were long and thin, almost like a woman's. He hesitated a moment before selecting a brush from the brush container. He did not want to begin his editorial, to begin that act of prostitution to which he had submitted himself so often in the past. The editorial requested was nothing so very different from other editorials he had written, it was true, but somehow at the back of his mind there was a vague feeling that some crucial point had been reached and that if he meant to fight for the things in which he believed he must do so now or become irretrievably lost.

Then, as he stroked his writing brush on the ink slab, he heard the clear, precise voice of his wife say: "Your editorial, is it finished?" He looked up to see Phoenix crossing the study, pulling on a glove. She

was a small woman with a round face and a pair of large, alert eyes. Through the red incision of her mouth her teeth showed white and sparkling, like the seeds of a freshly cut melon. Her brisk, efficient air always reminded Liu Pui of the Phoenix he had read about in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and it led him often to think that his wife too would have made an excellent family administrator had they lived in the olden days of the large extended family.

"No," Liu Pui said, slowly. "I have not yet begun."

"I thought if you had finished you could escort me to Madame Soong's on your way to the office. I have agreed to attend a show with her," Phoenix said. She seated herself in one of the two black ebony chairs which, separated by a small matching table, stood against the wall between Liu Pui's desk and the teakwood bookcase. Above the chairs hung four scroll paintings of landscapes representing the four seasons. They were done in the style of the Southern School of landscape painting, as begun by Wang Wei, the poet-painter of the T'ang Dynasty. Liu Pui had always thought highly of those paintings. For him there was something about the misty mountains and velvety seas which seemed to convey the essence of nature, something simple yet enigmatic. Seeing his wife against that background of pervading charm, Liu Pui

wished that life could be like art, pure, unadulterated, without its irrelevancies and its harsh realities.

"The Old Tiger summoned me to-day," Liu Pui said, abruptly.

"Oh, he has returned? I thought he was still in Shanghai," Phoenix said. "What was it that he wanted?"

"The usual sort of thing. He now wants the mayor defended."

"Is the mayor really so important to him?"

"I would imagine so," Liu Pui said. "He would stand to lose a lot of government business, not to mention his free hand in the black marketing of UNRRA supplies."

"Then I suppose there is no alternative but to do as you have been asked."

"No," Liu Pui said. "I can resign."

"Do not speak such foolishness," Phoenix said, a trifle sharply. "One cannot go through life always fighting for lost causes. You are no longer young. The difficulties in obtaining a good position are many and the inflation does not make things easier. Besides, there are the children to think of. Yu-ming will be ready for the university next term and the younger ones are all in school. They all depend on you."

Perhaps one cannot go through life fighting for lost causes, Liu Pui thought, but one cannot go through life always running away either. What has become of honesty, integrity, and truth? Have they really be-



come lost causes? During his university days, when he was so much involved in the May Fourth Movement and all the student demonstrations against the West, he used to believe that the most courageous thing a man could do was to lay down his life for his cause. Now he knew that the real courage was to live with one's cause, for to live was to doubt, to be uncertain, and to see one's cause not in the abstract but in the context of life's complicated truths.

Just then, Yu-ming entered the room. Yu-ming was Liu Pui's eldest son, a well-built lad of eighteen with close-cropped hair and a vigorously healthy complexion. His bearing was almost military and his Sun Yat-sen type of school uniform added to the impression. His facial features were not unlike Liu Pui's, although his cheeks were well filled and his nose lacked that quality of bleakness.

"Father, I return your books," Yu-ming said, as he laid a volume of Taoist quotations and two volumes of Chuang Tzu on the desk. "Shall I replace them in the bookcase for you?"

"There is no need," Liu Pui said. "You will not know their places." Then, remembering the purpose for which his son had borrowed his books, he added: "Your essay on Taoism, is it finished?"

"Yes," Yu-ming said. "But I was very critical and Mr. Hsu did not like it. I said China could never in-

dustrialize and become great if everyone were a Taoist. We had a long argument and Mr. Hsu said I was too young to appreciate Taoist philosophy."

Mr. Hsu was an old Chinese scholar whom Liu Pui had hired to tutor his children in things Chinese because he wanted to balance what they learned each day at the American missionary school. He did not want his children to grow up like so many modern Chinese, with the ways of the West half-learned and those of China half-remembered. He wanted them to have the best of both worlds, for he was thoroughly convinced that something wonderful would come from the fusion of the two.

"You should not show disrespect by arguing with your tutor," Phoenix said, severely.

"I cannot help it," Yu-ming said, "for I do not believe in what he says."

Liu Pui smiled as he listened to his son's comments on Taoism. When he smiled he became benign. The intenseness of the eyes softened and his features lost their austerity. There must be some truth in the statement that one turns to Taoism only in the twilight of one's life, he thought. Thirty years ago, his reaction to Taoism had been much the same as Yu-ming's. He too had thought in terms of organization, industrialization, and machines. Now he recognized the mania for

what it was, a mad rush toward dehumanization and a standardization of life. How he longed for a return to sanity, a return to the Tao. Aloud, he said: "You are right in what you say, but Mr. Hsu is right also."

"How can we both be right at the same time?" Yu-ming said.

"That is the mystery of the Tao," Liu Pui said.

A silence descended and for a moment each became occupied with his private thought. Then Yu-ming spoke.

"Father," Yu-ming said, darting a glance at Phoenix, as if he did not want her to share the confidence which he was about to impart.

"What is it?" Liu Pui said. His voice, too, was now full of gentleness.

"The student association has planned a demonstration against the mayor tomorrow," Yu-ming said. "Everyone knows that he is corrupt and should be removed from office. It would help us if you would rally public opinion to our support by writing an editorial on the subject for tomorrow."

"Ming, I do not want you to get involved in this trouble," Phoenix interjected, before Liu Pui could reply. "You are going to the university next term. Therefore you should be old enough to stay out of trouble. If the mayor is corrupt it is nothing to do with you."

"People like him are ruining our country," Yu-ming said, with all the seriousness and passionate idealism

of his years. "Each one of us has a responsibility to see that the welfare of the country is protected."

"That is for the government to decide," Phoenix said. "You will only get into trouble holding a demonstration and nothing will be changed. If you do not believe me you can ask your father. When he was at the university he used to take part in this kind of student demonstration and that kind of student demonstration. One time, I think, he demonstrated against the Treaty of Versailles. Two of his best friends were killed in that demonstration and he himself was almost killed. But what did it accomplish? The Treaty of Versailles remained just the same."

"They did what they thought was right," Yu-ming said. "That is the only thing a man can do."

"Even a righteous man must know when to show his righteousness," Phoenix said. She looked at her watch and added: "I have no time to argue with you. It is time for me to go out. But I forbid you to take part in this nonsense." With that she got up and, after saying good-bye to Liu Pui, left the room.

Left alone in the study, both father and son were lost for words. Then their eyes met, and an understanding passed between them.

"I will think about the editorial," Liu Pui said, finally. Yu-ming nodded and walked slowly from the room.

Liu Pui picked up the volume of

Taoist quotations absent-mindedly and began thumbing through the pages. What should he write, he wondered. What kind of a legacy should he leave behind? A man must do what he thinks right, that is true. But how does he know what is right? Is it right, for the sake of his family, to live so blatantly out of tune with his ideals? Or is it right to sacrifice the welfare of his family for something as insubstantial as integrity and pride? He wished somebody would decide for him and yet at the same time he knew that he alone could decide. Then a passage from the book caught his eye. He read:

*After Nature was lost, one talked of character;*

*After character was lost, then one talked of kindness;*

*After kindness was lost, then one talked of righteousness;*

*After righteousness was lost, then one talked of rules of conduct.*

*Now, rules of conduct indicate the thinning out of the innate honesty of man. . . .*

Liu Pui read the passage over again and thought for a moment. Then he picked up the writing brush which he had set down when Phoenix entered. He knew what he must write.



## *Sestina for Wings*

ELMA DEAN

This is my world of restless wings  
Inhabiting the scented trees—  
Small ceaseless wind from dawn till dark—  
Stirring alive the shade, the sun.  
Almost any kind of morning  
Comes to me by wing and song.

I credit the unfailing song  
Of sparrows for the feel of wings  
Under even the somber morning;  
And bless who planted all my trees  
To house the birds. A tardy sun  
Breaks brighter for the pine-tall dark.

I have heard at winter's early dark  
The wren-tit tapping his bell of song,  
While the last cold pencil line of sun  
Pointed the late returning wings  
Back to the stormy sleep of trees—  
Birds to sweeten a bitter morning.

Or wake to a fourth month's yellow morning,  
With hardly a finger of winter dark,  
And hear from all the shining trees  
The madrigal—the mating song!  
The almost-every-color wings  
Blind me in the April sun.

Black-headed grosbeaks in the sun  
Are good for anybody's morning—  
Gold and the checkered flash of wings!  
I lose whatever inner dark  
Is with me when the spate of song  
Pours headlong out of sky and trees.

Should there be any wide green trees  
Standing high against the sun,  
Fragrant and coned but with no song  
To fill the open cup of morning,  
Pity their silence and their dark  
And all that lives and has no wings.

But these, my trees, that each new morning  
Wear the sun around their dark,  
Build me towers of song and wings.

# THE INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

*by J. B. Condliffe*

SCIENTIFIC research is now making great advances toward an understanding of the mechanical operations and the chemistry of human beings. Delicate experiments locate the seat of different mental processes within the brain and trace the mechanisms by which impulses to action are transmitted. New light is thrown upon reasoning and memory. But the conscious element of human behavior—the element of choice, judgment, decision, will, all that is distinctively human—escapes scientific experiment. It may be that the freedom of the human will is limited by the mechanisms of what Sir Philip Sidney called “our clayey lodgings,” but always the essence of human behavior, “its capability and godlike reason,” eludes definition and measurement.

When we move from the individual to the organized groups which men have created, this indefinable conscious element is carried over. It is a moral element in the strict sense of being derived from immemorial experience used to distinguish between right and wrong. Social studies, therefore, must be concerned not only with description, classification, and interpretation, but with value judgments. They offer scope for measure and in some degree for statistical analysis, but their moral content invades even this analysis. The issues of social policy cannot be resolved simply by persuading social scientists to model themselves on the chemists. Students of society have long been faced with the moral issues that experimental scientists now begin to encounter when their discoveries are applied in practical affairs. The unconscious assumptions of such applications have too often been naïve. They have seemed at times to rely upon the creation of political mechanisms



without regard for the fact that these mechanisms have to be operated by men. More often they have carried into social policy a reliance upon materialist concepts of force and power, not realizing that these are the very essence of the Marxian doctrines they are designed to combat.

It is not my intention, even if I had the capacity, to make a comprehensive survey of the material consequences of scientific research. My main interest is in the human reactions to them, which are far more important. As E. D. Adrian has put it, "We are afraid, and rightly, because we cannot trust ourselves to act peaceably, because we know that unless we are ready to give up some of our old loyalties we may be forced into a fight that might end the human race."

This fear arises from the most alarming consequences of scientific research in our own time—the invention of new weapons of war and their implications for strategy. One may hope that in future generations these may cease to be regarded as the most important consequences of scientific research in our generation. If a trigger-happy incident can be avoided, it is at least possible that future generations may learn to live with nuclear fission, as our ancestors learned to live with fire, and as we have learned to live with Darwin and Freud. It may in the long run prove more difficult to live with the applications in business and statecraft of Pavlov's conditioned reflexes—in our own country as well as in that other side of the world which has been described as dominated by Pavlov's notion.

Other applications of scientific research, particularly in communication and transport, are steadily driving the whole world into closer neighborhood. Four years ago I was in Iran. One morning we were awakened very early in Shiraz, a city of gardens and poets. We shared some coffee with three American pilots who were engaged in the international campaign against locusts and a nurse assigned to public health activities for the United Nations. We ourselves had breakfast at dawn among the ruins of Persepolis, the capital that Xerxes built when Esther was his queen. In the morning sun we set out on the road to Isfahan. The Gashgai tribes

were moving their flocks up the mountain slopes in search of summer pastures as they have done for centuries. We had to stop our car to allow one party to cross the road. The men had gone ahead with their sheep and goats, while the tents were still being loaded onto the grumbling camels. Some of the older women were riding little Persian donkeys and carrying their family treasures. One of these women was carrying a radio. Here in this ancient land in a few short morning hours the contraction of space and time was obvious.

I do not need to discuss in any detail how this contraction has affected military strategy. The strategic argument in this country between those who would rely mainly upon the deterrent effect of long-range retaliation atomic bombing and those who plead for other strings to our bow—for a variety of the new weapons and an expensive radar network to give warning of imminent attack—this argument is no longer classified secret because those involved in it have used various means to take their case to the public. More immediately, it is obvious that when airplanes travel at the speeds they do, national boundaries are easily violated. The time has gone by when small nation-states can hope to defend themselves or observe strict neutrality. We have recognized this by encouraging the Europeans to take collective defense measures. And we have ourselves departed from our traditional policy of avoiding entangling alliances and built up a network of commitments in many areas remote from our shores.

Yet in face of these international realities, the fear of atomic warfare has driven public opinion and authority in our own and other countries to make absolute not only the overriding requirements of national security, but the police mechanisms of investigation and clearance devised to prevent leakages of information that might weaken security. The language used is dogmatic. "There can be no tampering with the national security, which in times of peril must be absolute.\* Who dares to challenge this state-

\* United States Atomic Energy Commission, "Findings and Recommendations of the Personnel Security Board in the Case of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer," reprinted in *U.S. News and World Report*, June 11, 1954.

ment? Or to deny that even this period of uneasy peace is a time of peril?

We are faced, therefore, with a tragic paradox. The applications of scientific research are undermining the very existence of the nation-state by destroying its protection in time and space; but in face of this harsh fact national security is proclaimed as the absolute value and given priority over all other social values. Resolution of the paradox must surely lie in a re-examination of the operative meanings to be attributed to these symbol words. What is national security? And how can we achieve it? We can all agree that it is of paramount importance to preserve the strength of countries such as our own which have given freedom and opportunity and decency to their people. But this need not involve unquestioning acceptance of "the rigid circumscription of regulations and criteria established for us,"† as the only or even the best way of preserving our national strength.

When we turn from the sphere of military strategy to that of economic livelihood, we find the same paradox. The world is being driven into neighborhood and interdependence; but the forces of economic nationalism have been strengthened. In the meantime, however, scientific research has disturbed the precarious balance between numbers and resources. In the perspective of history, this may prove to be a more important consequence of scientific research than the invention of new weapons, potentially destructive as they are.

In the last thousand years the human population of the world has increased about tenfold. The rate of increase has been greater in each succeeding half-century and is still accelerating. By far the largest increase since the Industrial Revolution has been in the new world—the settlements of western Europeans in the Americas and the British dominions. The population of western Europe itself has increased enormously. In the nineteenth century European emigrants occupied all the sparsely populated interior grasslands of both temperate zones. By settlement, conquest, trade, and invest-

† *Ibid.*



ment, the resources of both the temperate and the tropical zones (and even of the Arctic and Antarctic zones) were made tributary to the rising numbers and improved living levels of the Western world. The nineteenth-century system of international trade and finance, centered on the London money market, channeled the resources of the whole world to western Europe and its offshoots overseas.

This dominance of the economic world by the scientific Western peoples has collapsed, but the cycles of population increase go on. In the United States and the other countries of the new world the birth rate has increased, while death rates continue to fall. In western Europe and Japan the cycle has still not run its course; the babies are already born who will produce a new increase, even though birth rates may be stabilized or decline. More important, the application of scientific research to food production and to the control of epidemic and endemic disease has set in motion new cycles of increase all over the world—including the already densely populated countries of Asia. Even though the rates of increase in such countries as India and China are not yet as great as in the Western world, their populations are so massive that even moderate rates result in huge increases in absolute numbers.

The importance of this problem has little to do with the ultimate exhaustion of food supplies, or minerals, or standing room. We have recently been deluged with pessimistic estimates on these topics, but I cannot work myself into a state of alarm about this planet which men have plundered so long and so successfully. It seems to me that our grandchildren will be at least as capable as we have been in solving the problems bequeathed to us by our grandfathers.

Nor do I worry about global aggregates. Many recent scientific surveys have shown that there is enough land, and there are enough fish in the sea, to feed the increased population that can be foreseen, and to feed it at more adequate levels of nutrition. There may be temporary pinches and scarcities of certain metals, but substitutes can be found. The secret of productivity lies in the application of energy to transform existing matter into forms suitable for human

use. Those who for a century past have predicted the imminent exhaustion of coal and oil reserves have not seen their forecasts borne out, and we have new sources of energy. We begin to envisage the possibility that nuclear energy may revolutionize agricultural practice, producing new mutations of plant and animal species, changing the character of soils and climates, and radically altering the cycles of growth. If men are driven to it, they will find nutrition in the algae. They may discover how to persuade the microorganisms on the sea floor to produce petroleum. It is at least possible that they may learn how to control their own reproductive processes and so put an end, or at least a check, to the cumulative increase of numbers. Therefore, I cannot feel alarmed in these aggregate terms.

The real cause for uneasiness is that men organized in nation-states may refuse to accept the necessity of organizing the economic co-operation and interchange that will distribute the food effectively. We have enough food and to spare in the world now, but large masses of people go hungry. Here in the United States we restrict acreage and still pile up surpluses. For the first time since the war, there has been a surplus of rice in southeast Asia. We waste our intellectual energy when we worry about the niggardliness of nature. It is our own emotional reactions that prevent us from solving the human problems that we should worry about. The fault lies "not in our stars, but in ourselves."

The complex of international economic relationships is not simple. Its roots strike deep into every aspect of human activity in the everyday work of earning a livelihood. The food problem cannot be solved unless industrial productivity is built up. There are narrow limits to the capacity of poverty-stricken and illiterate peoples to help themselves. International charity does not solve their problems. Nor is it possible by a sudden irruption of foreign technical advice to bring them to quick acceptance of more efficient economic behavior. Ignorance and ill health, and therefore lack of imaginative energy, are parts of their difficulty; but fears and suspicions, and a multitude of petty, vested interests must also be dislodged. Moreover, we think too much of the moles we see in their

eyes, and not enough of the beam in our own. A large part of the international economic disequilibrium in the world today would disappear if we would buy enough of what they can sell to enable them to buy what they need from us.

Unhappily, obstacles are daily put in the way of international co-operation for fear of unemployment, of reduced profit, or of capital losses, by groups that have been sheltered from competition and understandably wish to remain so. This is an intractable, stubborn, and immensely tangled set of issues, with intricate relationships that can stand comparison with the most complicated experimental problems in the physical sciences. But in addition it is shot through with the baffling value judgments and emotional reactions of human beings whose vital interests are at stake. It cannot be taken to pieces for experimentation. Nor can it be put into mathematical or statistical formulas, however complex and intricate.

Moreover, these negative aspects of international economic co-operation are only half the problem. The other half is the constructive task of devising standards and procedures and mechanisms that will facilitate the exchange of goods and services and knowledge and energy. The linking of national monetary and credit systems in such a way as to establish flexible and workable relations between the national price structures, is a task to challenge the most creative and imaginative mind. Since the international gold standard broke down under the strain of war in 1914, this task has defeated all our efforts. Nor has it proved easy to devise effective methods by which a self-sustaining chain reaction of economic development may be started in industrially backward countries. We have indeed made remarkable progress in lessening economic fluctuations, but only on a national basis and largely at the cost of international co-operation. The task of creating a system of international economic relationships that will facilitate free exchanges and flexible adjustments without running the risk of periodic violent fluctuations has still to be attempted.

If the pressure of numbers produces Malthusian effects in our time, if there are famines and wars and pestilences, if babies die



and their parents are warped by disease, it will not be because the world lacks material resources, but because we lack the wit to make these resources available to those who need them. The nineteenth century dispelled the fears to which Malthus gave expression by the simple expedient of diverting to the dominant Western peoples most of the increased production made possible by applied science. We cannot do this again. Other and more numerous peoples now claim their share. If we are to establish a new system of world trade and clearing of payments it must this time be truly international. We are driven to make the attempt by the world-wide applications of scientific discoveries, but we are hampered by the fears these discoveries have aroused, as well as by the prejudices and loyalties and vested interests which carry over from the old order.

Our grandchildren, looking back to our present perplexities, may come to see that our actions have transcended our fears. There are already signs of a new economic order in the world, and this order is a direct result of the new scientific discoveries and their applications. Our own economic system of production and marketing, and the distribution of its rewards among income groups, here in the United States, are in process of radical change. The impact of this change is being felt all over the world, primarily by reason of the international expansion of corporate activities.

The new leaders of industry, seeking raw materials and market outlets abroad, have devised constructive ways of circumventing the obstacles which governments place to economic co-operation across national boundaries. For example: The oil companies in the Middle East sell their oil mainly in Western Europe. In order to persuade governments to remove gas rationing, and thus expand the market for oil, they agreed to accept local currencies in payment for their sales. They use these currencies to purchase equipment and supplies wherever the currencies are acceptable. Thus trade is expanded behind the barriers of exchange control.

The American producers of business machines and office equipment moved quickly after the war to establish overseas producing units in many countries. One of these corporations has devised a



clearing system by which its various European subsidiaries may specialize on the production of parts and trade them within the restrictions laid down by exchange controls and monetary clearing agreements. The new supermarket just opened at Accra on the Gold Coast operates with American cash registers made in Western Germany.

Many ingenious contracts have been devised for technical surveys and advisory consultation, for the use of patented processes, for direct participating investment, operating concessions, construction, training of management and workers, and a variety of other services. The form of these contracts is slowly becoming standardized. A new Law Merchant is in the making, based upon the forms of production and investment dictated by new scientific processes. The nineteenth-century type of foreign lending has virtually disappeared, but the volume of direct investment by private corporations has reached impressive proportions. Even more important, the immaterial investment of experienced personnel and technical know-how is growing at a rate which is without precedent.

Scientific discoveries have forced us into a difficult re-evaluation of strategic concepts. They have disturbed the precarious balance between population and resources. They are driving us to new forms of economic organization. Most disturbingly of all, they are bringing a redistribution of power and therefore challenging our existing forms of political organization. How much of a step is it, after all, from automation and push-button warfare to push-button government by experts? And how desirable a step? Perhaps the ultimate question we must face is the question that Abraham Lincoln raised at Gettysburg, whether government of the people, by the people, and for the people, can be preserved, or whether democratic institutions and personal freedoms as we have conceived them must perish from the earth.

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book reviews for French and American periodicals, and is now writing a book on "the revolt of the intellectuals" for Knopf.

#### TILLIE OLSEN

("Help Her to Believe") is the mother of four daughters, aged 7 to 22. She wrote a great deal during her teens, but left high school without finishing, and was not able to return to writing as a preoccupation until several years ago. A Stanford Creative Writing Fellowship for 1955-56 has made it possible for her to quit her job and devote her time to writing.

#### MAX COSMAN

("Mr. Maugham as Footnote"), who teaches in Brooklyn, New York, appeared in the Winter 1955 issue of *The Pacific Spectator* with an article on George Orwell. In the interval he has published several articles of literary criticism in *The Arizona Quarterly*, *The Colorado Quarterly*, and *Theatre Arts*.

#### DAVID T. K. WONG

("The Legacy of Liu Pui") took graduate work at Stanford Univer-

sity and was for a number of years a newspaperman in Hong Kong. He is at present teaching history at St. Stephen's College in Hong Kong and putting in time during the holidays "writing stories and collecting rejection slips." *Spectator* readers will remember him for "The Vase," which appeared in the Spring 1954 issue.

#### ELMA DEAN

("Sestina for Wings") has published prize-winning verse for the past fifteen years, and her World War II poem "Letter to Saint Peter" is inscribed at the American Military Cemetery in Cambridge, England. She writes that she "would rather garden than write" and that her husband and son consider her cooking one of her more important talents.

#### J. B. CONDLIFFE

("The International Consequences of Scientific Research"), a specialist in the field of international economic relations, is professor of Economics and director of the Teaching Institute of Economics at the University of California at Berkeley. His article "Can a World-Wide Depression Be Avoided?" appeared in the Summer 1952 issue of the *Spectator*.



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*joined with Foreign Minister Paulo Cunha of Portugal in a joint communiqué which, in deploring "various statements attributed to Soviet rulers visiting in Asia," referred to Russian allegations concerning the Portuguese "provinces" in the Far East. Just prior to the joint statement Senhor Cunha had charged India with "imperialist ambitions" in seeking to annex Goa.*

*Mr. Dulles may have thought that he was merely slapping a Soviet wrist, but the practical effect on uncounted numbers of Asians was that of an American admission to Soviet charges—and this at a time when Ambassador John Sherman Cooper was struggling to convince India of American neutrality in the Goa controversy. The consensus among Western observers in India was unmistakable: The implication of United States support for Lisbon's Goa stand had obliterated whatever adverse impression the Russians had created for themselves in India.*

*Whatever United States diplomats may have had in mind, this is not the way to win friends and influence people in the East.*

*Robert C. North*